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To
Peggy & David

FROM THE EDITOR

The volumes of the *Sovietica* series have gradually grown to cover almost all the aspects of contemporary Soviet philosophy or, more precisely, of contemporary Marxist-Leninist philosophy. The task has met with resistance on the part of some non-Marxist philosophers who quite naturally have failed to see much in common between their enterprise and the philosophical perspectives being developed in the Soviet Union. There has also been an uphill battle with Marxist-Leninist philosophers whose *partijnost'* makes them suspicious of any "uncommitted" renditions of their philosophic enterprise.

This latest volume of *Sovietica* deals with Mao Tse-tung Thought. Of all the many forms that Marxism and Marxism-Leninism have taken in over one hundred years, Mao Tse-tung Thought is undoubtedly the most problematic and even paradoxical. For the Marxist-Leninist philosophers of the Soviet Union, Mao Tse-tung Thought is neither philosophy nor Marxism-Leninism in any recognizable sense of these terms. The response from the Chinese Communist side consists in asserting that Mao Tse-tung Thought is the only adequate expression of Marxist-Leninist philosophy (by which they often mean Stalinist philosophy) that exists today: everything else is but "revisionism".

Dr. Francis Soo's study approaches this complex set of questions through an analysis of the neuralgic centerpiece of Mao Tse-tung Thought – its theory of dialectic. For, only if Mao Tse-tung meant by dialectic something novel and specific can the Soviet philosophical indictment be assessed and the Chinese Communist response be evaluated. Putting Mao Tse-tung's theory of dialectic into the context both of the history of Western philosophy and of the wider vistas of traditional Chinese thought, Dr. Soo demonstrates that no simple characterization of Mao Tse-tung Thought is possible. Neither simply a thinker, nor a mere politician, Mao Tse-tung spoke for an ancient culture on the verge of its most momentous phase.

Dr. Soo's work represents a genuine accomplishment in the field of cross-cultural analysis. The reader will find here no mere juxtaposition of Mao's notion of dialectic with that deriving from Western philosophy; nor is there a simple hereditary relationship between Mao Tse-tung Thought and classical Chinese thought. As Dr. Soo shows, the relations are complex and "transfor-

mational": they depend on being able to take several viewpoints in their mutual interdependence – "dialectically", as it were.

If an understanding of Mao Tse-tung Thought is of critical importance today – and few would want to deny this – then an adequate philosophic understanding of how contemporary Chinese Marxist-Leninist philosophy both assimilates and copes with its Maoist intellectual heritage is even more important. Such an understanding is seriously furthered by the cross-cultural study accomplished by Dr. Francis Soo in this volume of *Sovietica.*

Boston College T. BLAKELEY

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Is it not pleasant and delightful to give thanks always to others! Upon the completion of this work, therefore, my sincere thanks go:

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INTRODUCTION

The year 1979 ushered in a new phase in China's long and continuous revolution. Currently, this new phase is being symbolically referred to, by the Chinese leaders themselves, as the 'New Long March' (a continuation of the legendary and historical Long March) in terms of modernization, which comprises the Four Modernizations: Agriculture, Industry, Science and Technology, and Military Defense. Such an all-encompassing attempt at modernization may appear, to some at least, to be something new, or may indicate a radical shift in her policy. But upon closer examination, this decision seems only to reflect an historical continuity in terms of the two major long-term goals of the Chinese Revolution: 'national independence' and 'modernization' (or 'industrialization'). The former would make China strong; the latter, wealthy. For, ever since the Opium War in 1840 and throughout the Revolutions of 1911 and 1949, China has always pursued these two revolutionary goals, though with different emphases at different times. This has been especially true during the past three decades as this twofold goal has dictated all of China's important policies, both domestic and foreign. In other words, while the concrete policies may have appeared to be lacking in unity at times, they have been formulated with the specific intent of achieving national independence and modernization.

From this perspective, the New Long March marks the passage of post-Mao China beyond the transition of succession toward the continued pursuit of the same revolutionary goals. But why the New Long March now, why these Four Modernizations, at this historical period? The decision seems to have been based on two exigencies: one internal, the other external.

Internally, China has gradually realized, after almost thirty years of trial and error, that it is one thing to win a (violent) revolution, and quite another to modernize a society. Furthermore, to modernize a society as vast as China involves not only the subjective factor – 'redness' in terms of political consciousness, hard work and willingness to sacrifice, but also the objective factor – 'expertise' in terms of science, technology, capital and managerial skill. The relationship between 'redness' and 'expertise' should be dialectical, that is, interdependent and interacting; but to keep this dialectical balance in practice is extremely difficult. For example, it seems that from hindsight, during the

1960's and 1970's, more attention had been given to the subjective factor, 'redness', and less to the objective factor, 'expertise'. This is one of the reasons, perhaps, why China up to now remains materially poor and backward; hence her need for modernization is greater now than ever before. From this perspective, the launching of the New Long March in terms of modernization indicates a renewed but continuous effort to transform China into a modern and wealthy industrial nation.

The external exigency is China's conviction that for the past two decades, Sino-Soviet relations have been deteriorating to such an extent that to the Chinese leaders, the Soviet military threat has increasingly become both real and imminent. To deal with this dangerous situation realistically, China must seek a long-term solution, which has to comprise three things: (1) avoidance of any direct confrontation with the Soviet Union, (2) acceleration of the modernization of her weak and outdated military defense, and (3) 'creation' of a worldwide balance of power by allying herself with as many countries, both Communist and capitalist, as possible, especially with Japan and the United States. It is within this context that we can better understand why China painfully tolerated repeated Vietnamese provocations which, according to the Chinese leaders, are surely backed by the Soviet Union; why the speedy buildup of her military defense has become a priority, that is, one of the Four Modernizations; and why China acted so swiftly on an open-door (foreign) policy, which within a year has effected, among other things, the signing of the peace treaty with Japan and the establishment of full diplomatic relations with the United States on January 1, 1979.

All this reveals that China and her development into a strong, independent and wealthy nation has been both complex and intriguing; and precisely as such, it has been fascinating to observe, but difficult to understand. To overcome this difficulty, one possible solution is to study China in terms of her revolutionary goals (i.e., national independence and modernization), or better, in terms of the leaders who have formulated them. This is precisely our approach which, by studying Mao and his thought, attempts to shed some light on China and her development, past, present and future.

Regardless of one's personal view of Mao, no one can deny that he is an historical figure of great importance. Indeed, Mao's significance in the history of modern China, and hence of the world, is almost self-evident. As a single individual, Mao contributed, perhaps more than any other of China's leaders, to the total transformation of modern China, from a millenial and humiliated monarchy, through a semi-feudal and semi-colonial status to an independent and powerful nation. As a result, in any international event today, China

must be reckoned with as one of the most important countries. This has become even more true since the establishment of full diplomatic relations between China and the United States.

But it is not so easy to understand Mao and his thought. On the contrary, like any great man, Mao was, and still is, a 'sign of contradiction'. To some he is a god, a great leader and an inspiring teacher; to others he is a devil, a cruel dictator and a deceiver. And even to his closest comrades and colleagues who were China's top leaders, Mao was equally 'contradictory'.[1]

On the other hand, because of his stature, countless books and articles have been written on Mao and his thought, which tend to be either polemical (i.e., for political purposes) or superficial (i.e., for fast publication). To our knowledge, not even one work exists which is impartially devoted to the study of the *philosophical* foundation of Mao's thought and action as expressed in his theoretical works and revolutionary activities. But it is our firm belief that no genuine understanding of Mao and his thought is possible without an adequate grasp of his philosophical foundation. For it is this which serves as the springboard for all of Mao's theoretical works and revolutionary activities. This philosophical foundation is nothing other than Mao's theory of dialectic.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The precise purpose of our research is to examine Mao's theory of dialectic as formulated mainly before 1949. More specifically, our study has a twofold task: to reconstruct Mao's theory of dialectic and to make a critical evaluation of it. But why should we undertake such a study? What is Mao's theory of dialectic? And what is the nature of our research in relation to Mao's theory of dialectic? To answer these questions satisfactorily, of course, is our task below; but by way of introduction, let us make two brief remarks.

The first is that the twofold task of our research – a reconstruction of Mao's theory of dialectic and a critical evaluation of it – is dictated by the very nature of Mao's own writings. Since Mao himself did not set down his theory of dialectic systematically,[2] it is imperative that his dialectical ideas as spread throughout his writings be understood and sorted out, synthesized and reconstructed, and finally presented in a systematic structure. That is precisely what we shall do – to make a systematic reconstruction of Mao's dialectical ideas – which we call Mao's theory of dialectic. For the sake of objectivity, we shall try to keep our reconstruction 'textual' by basing it almost entirely on Mao's own texts, while reserving for later our own

critical evaluation, which constitutes the other part of the twofold goal of our research.

The second preliminary remark is that the nature of our research is *philosophical*. It is not an historical study of Mao's theoretical works or of his revolutionary activities, though our research will deal with many historical events in modern China, including especially those of Mao's life. Nor do we intend to compile a well-documented and objective biography of Mao, though his personal biography constitutes part of the necessary background for understanding Mao's theory of dialectic. Nor is our research political in the sense that it is concerned with Mao as a political leader, though for any understanding of Mao, his political life should never be neglected.

Rather, the precise nature of our research is essentially *philosophical*, and this in two senses. First, instead of becoming overly involved with many of Mao's revolutionary activities and political views – though they had, and still have, far-reaching consequences for China – we shall try to go beyond them and understand Mao on a deeper level. We shall focus on Mao's world-view which is the philosophical foundation of all his theoretical works and revolutionary activities. For, as mentioned above, we firmly believe that it is from his philosophical foundation that spring all of Mao's theoretical works and revolutionary activities. Secondly, the philosophical aspect of our research is also manifested by our very method of 'reflective synthesis'. Instead of trying to understand Mao and his thought from a literal, political or superficial point of view, our research adopts a deeper, but perhaps unusual approach of 'reflective synthesis', the precise nature of which requires a word of explanation.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The method according to which this book is written is 'reflective synthesis'. But what is its precise nature? Before answering this question, we shall explain first the necessity of our choice of it, which will then help us to understand its precise nature.

There are three reasons: two general, one specific (to Mao). The first involves the language barrier. Since Chinese and English are of two entirely different linguistic families, they differ not only in vocabulary and pronunciation but also in sentence structure and grammar. Any translation between Chinese and English is an extremely difficult task. Although literal translations are often possible, they do not necessarily convey correct meanings; indeed in some cases, literal translations even cause misunderstandings. The

second reason is the radical difference in Chinese and Western thinking patterns. The former tends to be synthetic, intuitive, historical and concrete; the latter, analytic, rationalistic, empirical and metaphysical.[3] The third reason is specific to Mao's own writings. Since most of his writings are essentially political, they tend to be polemical. For this reason, it is hard to distill what is philosophical from his political writings. Furthermore, since Mao's writings are 'unsystematic', it is imperative to understand first, and then present, his theory of dialectic in a systematic manner. All of this necessitates the use of our method: reflective synthesis.

To overcome these difficulties, reflective synthesis employs such philosophical activities as thinking, understanding, meditating, reflecting, intuiting, analyzing, distilling, reasoning and synthesizing. Among them, the following activities are emphasized: 'understanding', 'analyzing', 'synthesizing', 'reconstructing' and 'evaluating'.

The purpose of understanding is to arrive at a correct grasp of, or better, a feel for Mao's thought. Concretely, it involves mainly three types of readings: (1) the reading of Mao's entire *Selected Works* in Chinese, together with (2) the reading of works on Chinese history in general and on China's modern history in particular, as well as on Chinese philosophy, followed by (3) the reading of those works that are directly related to Mao's dialectical ideas, especially his four philosophical works.

Simultaneously in operation with understanding is analysis, which aims at an objective or impartial analysis of Mao's thought. But to be 'objective or impartial' does not mean to exclude all subjective judgement, because without subjective judgement, any type of philosophical analysis is impossible. What should be emphasized, however, is that subjective analysis must be based on objective data, that is, Mao's own writings.

By applying the results of understanding and analysis, we attempt to achieve a synthetic grasp of Mao's dialectical ideas. In the process, we will gain an increasingly clear understanding of Mao's dialectical ideas as unified by his key term 'contradiction', which will then enable us to derive the basic laws and principles of dialectical ideas.

It is then imperative to put these basic dialectical principles into a philosophically systematic structure. This is nothing but our reconstruction of Mao's dialectical ideas – or his theory of dialectic – with a twofold aim: (a) to make it understandable to Western scholars, (b) without doing any injustice to Mao's thought.

Finally, the task of evaluating is also needed. To achieve this, we will try to avoid a 'quantitative approach' in favor of a 'qualitative approach'. The

former, influenced by behavioral science,[4] has three tendencies: (1) over-emphasis on quantitative data or statistics, (2) mechanical use of quotations – words, phrases or sentences – and (3) dogmatic assertions via stereotyped models or concepts. On the other hand, the qualitative approach emphasizes two aspects: 'meaning orientation' and 'context orientation'. The first tries to look for the meanings or messages of a text, which sometimes involves going beyond its mere appearance (or literal meaning). The context orientation aims at grasping the meanings or messages in their proper contexts. One such illustration can be found in Mao's usages of the concept of 'contradiction', which occur in three different contexts: natural, cognitive and social (to be discussed later). Therefore, it is important to study the meaning of contradiction in each context first and then to formulate a philosophical understanding of the concept as a whole.

One concluding remark on these five philosophical activities. Although they are presented here as five different activities, they are in fact interrelated and together constitute the very soul of reflective synthesis.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

Since our study is philosophical rather than historical, biographical, political or otherwise, we do not need that many volumes. As a matter of fact, both our primary and our secondary sources are limited in number. The following is a list of some of the most important sources, first the primary and then the secondary sources.

Primary Sources

The most important work among the primary sources is, of course, *Mao Tse-tung hsüan-chi* 毛澤東選集 (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*) in Chinese, published in 1951; and its English translation, *The Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* published in 1967.[5] This work can be considered 'the primary of the primaries'. Next is *Mao Tse-tung chu-tso hsüan-tu* 毛澤東著作選讀 (*Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung*) in Chinese, published in 1965; and its English translation published in 1971.[6] We also have Mao's *Four Essays on Philosophy.*[7] In addition, our primary sources include *Mao Tse-tung chi: 1917–1949* 毛澤東集 (*Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung: 1917–1949*) in Chinese, published by Japanese scholars.[8] Finally, we would like to mention that in our possession, we also have *Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wan-sui* 毛澤東思想萬歲 (*Long Live the Thought of Mao Tse-tung*) in Chinese, published by the Nationalist government in Taiwan;[9] and its English

translation, the *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought*, published by the U.S. Joint Publication Research Service in 1974.[10]

Secondary Sources

The secondary sources include books and articles. According to their content, they can be divided into four types: (1) those related to Mao's thought in general, (2) those related to Mao's philosophical thought, especially his dialectical ideas, (3) those related to China's history, ancient and modern, (4) those related to Chinese philosophy or the Chinese way of thinking. Since there are too many of them to list here and since they can be found in our bibliography at the end, we shall mention only a few important ones here. For example, on Chinese philosophy, there are: Fung Yu-lan 馮友蘭, *Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih* 中國哲學史 (*History of Chinese Philosophy*); Yang Jung-kuo 楊榮國, *Chien-ming Chung-kuo che-hsüeh shih* 簡明中國哲學史 (*A Concise History of Chinese Philosophy*); Kuo K'an-po 郭湛波, *Chung-kuo chung-ku ssu-hsiang shih* 中國中古思想史 (*History of Mid-ancient Intellectual Thought in China: 220 B.C. – 1020 A.D.*); on Chinese history, C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*; Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China: 1840–1928*; and John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*; on Mao and his thought, Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*; Benjamin Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*, and *Communism and China: Ideology in Flux*; Jerome Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*; Li Jui 李銳, *Mao Tse-tung t'ung chih ti ch'u-ch'i ko-ming huo-tung* 毛澤東同志的初期革命活動 (*The Early Revolutionary Activities of Chairman Mao Tse-tung*); Edgar Snow, *Red China* and *The Long Revolution*; M. Altaisky and V. Georgiyev, *The Philosophical View of Mao Tse-tung* and V. A. Krivtsov and V. Y. Sidikhmenov and others, *A Critique of Mao Tse-tung's Theoretical Conceptions.*[11]

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

There are six chapters, with the present introduction, stating the importance and purpose of this study, the method to be used, as well as the bibliographical sources. Chapter 1 is 'Mao Tse-tung: the Man and His Time'. Biographical in nature, it places Mao in his proper historical perspective, especially in the context of modern China. Chapter 2, 'Mao's Methodology and Point of Departure', discusses Mao's own method – 'synthetic praxis', the soul of which is flexibility, dynamism and practicability. Chapter 3 is 'Mao's Theory of Dialectic' or, more accurately, our reconstruction and presentation thereof.

We first present Mao's key term, 'contradiction', as a philosophical concept, and then his theory of dialectic. The former is understood by Mao as 'a dynamic relationship of interaction', or 'a dynamic relationship as such', or simply 'relationality'. In the light of this term 'contradiction', Mao's theory of dialectic is explained in three moments: 'universality', 'particularity' and 'dialectic'. Together these three moments form both a theory and a method by which the dynamic processes of development in nature, man and society can be not only understood but also transformed. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 form a unit, our critical evaluation of Mao's theory of dialectic. Our evaluation begins with Mao's methodology, moves on to his key concept 'contradiction', and finally focuses on its three dialectical moments: universality, particularity and dialectic. All this aims at achieving a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of Mao's theory of dialectic. Finally, there is a conclusion, in which two related questions are discussed: (1) the 'Marxism-ness' and 'Chinese-ness' of Mao, and (2) Mao's status as a philosopher.

CHAPTER 1

MAO TSE-TUNG: THE MAN AND HIS TIME

Man is an historical being. He is born, lives, and passes away in a definite period of history. He is part of that history. Thus, it is no wonder that 'historicity'[1] has received ever-increasing attention in our time; it is indispensable in almost all fields of study involving man and society.

This universal truth is even more relevant to our present study of Mao Tse-tung and his philosophy. For Mao is considered as the Father of the People's Republic of China, the representative figure of the Chinese Communist revolution, and the 'maker' of China's contemporary history. Thus, in order to understand him fully and to make a critical analysis of his philosophy, it is necessary to devote some attention to the historical background of modern China. For it is out of such an historical development that Mao emerged as the leader and formulated his philosophical thought. This chapter will provide a brief account of the modern history of China as well as a biographical sketch of Mao Tse-tung.

1.1. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

One approach to studying the modern history of China is to begin with the Opium War of 1839–42,[2] which event marked a turning point. In sharp contrast with the relative order, stability and continuity of traditional Chinese society, the modern history of China is a record of disorder, instability and change. The revolutionary climate which the country had experienced in the last hundred years or more was so intense and widespread that this period is sometimes called the period of 'the Chinese revolution'.[3]

However, before examining the modern history of China, it would be helpful to consider briefly traditional Chinese society prior to the nineteenth century. For it is against the traditional background that revolutionary change can be properly understood.

1.11. The Traditional Period of China

Chinese society had traditionally been monarchical and centralized. Under the empire system, established with the first dynasty in 221 B.C., and which disappeared only in 1911,[4] China had been a monarchy, which was basically

a patriarchical cooperative society under benevolent rulers, and therefore regarded, as it were, as one great family. The Emperor was the ruling father; the people were his obedient children. In addition, the Emperor was also the mediator between the people and Heaven, because he was considered as the "Son of Heaven" possessing the "Mandate of Heaven" which was hereditary within the royal family.[5] Since the Emperor was the Son of Heaven, his power and authority – legislative, executive and judicial – had a divine origin; they were at least in theory supreme and absolute, though in practice their exercise was curtailed in many ways.

In the central government, the Emperor was surrounded by an elaborate court, consisting of a distinguished and restricted 'bureaucracy' of scholar-officials who had passed a series of difficult civil service examinations on the Confucian classics.[6] Although the Emperor was the head of the imperial court, he depended on these scholar-officials to execute his decrees and directives. Thus, in the last analysis, it was this small bureaucracy of scholar-officials that actually governed the imperial state, because it was they who held the most important positions in the administrative boards: Rites, Civil Office, War, Revenue, Punishment and Works.[7]

While the imperial government was highly centralized, its operation was decentralized; its administration was based on a principle of local self-government. Because of China's enormous size and cumbersome communications, the authority of the central government of the imperial court could be effectively exercised only through a hierarchical system of territorial-administrative divisions which consisted of three levels: province (*sheng* 省), city or prefecture (*fu* 府), and district (*hsien* 縣).[8] As a result of this delegation of power, local administrations were left virtually autonomous, especially in areas remote from the seat of the central government. Local governments were allowed to exercise substantial power and authority within their respective localities, provided, of course, they were able to send annual taxes and levies to the central government.

But the success or failure of local government depended in turn on the unique social structure of the traditional Chinese society, which was based on the family system.[9] Why was the family system in China so important? For two reasons: one economic, and the other cultural. Since economically China was basically an agrarian society, the lives of most people were centered on the land; they lived their lives in the family and in the village, which was nothing but a group of families and kinship units or clans.[10] Thus family and village became the basic agricultural units. They supplied the necessary labor force; they worked together in mutual-aid teams; they administered their own

affairs, economic and otherwise. Furthermore, both the family and the village served as the cultural center in educational and ritual or religious affairs. It was in the family and the village that children were introduced to classical Confucianism and began to learn ritual or religious observances, which were important in the social, cultural and above all, political life of society. The filial piety and obedience inculcated in the family would later become the foundation for loyalty to the ruler and obedience to authority in the state. In short, the family and the village, while not part of the formal structure of the imperial government, were in fact the cornerstone of local government.

Such was the formal and informal structure of the imperial state of China, enormous in size and complex in structure. Its successful operation was, however, due not to law or force but to the traditional political philosophy which was basically Confucian.[11] According to this political philosophy, ethics and politics were one and the same; the state and the individual were regarded as one entity under the control of the same code of ethics. As a result, ethics became the cornerstone of Chinese political thought.

Since the ethical code was the basis for political behavior, each person was expected to cultivate virtues appropriate to one's status and position in the family and in society. Thus the rulers, including the Emperor, were expected to cultivate particularly the virtues of benevolence (*jen* 仁),[12] righteousness and justice, which were considered appropriate to their status as rulers. On the other hand, the people whom the Emperor ruled were encouraged to cultivate the virtues of loyalty, submission and obedience to authority. Guided by such a political philosophy, the Emperor was expected to rule by virtue and example rather than by law and force. When virtues were cultivated by both the rulers and the ruled, peace and prosperity would result; otherwise, rebellion and calamities were inevitable.

The outbreak of rebellion often signified that the Emperor was losing the Mandate of Heaven and that a new dynasty was in the making.[13] Following this cyclical pattern – a ruling family coming to power, having its heyday, declining and eventually being replaced by a new dynasty – China underwent twenty-four such dynastic changes until the disappearance of the last dynasty in 1911.[14]

Even such a brief summary as this can give us a general view of traditional Chinese society. She was an imperial state, a monarchy where the Emperor ruled supreme. The imperial court was highly centralized and controlled by a small bureaucracy of Confucian scholar-officials, but its actual operation was balanced by a decentralized system of almost autonomous local governments, based on the family-village system firmly rooted in Chinese culture. While the

life of each dynasty followed a pattern of dynastic cycle, China seemed to have always been able to maintain the continuity of identity as a culture and as a nation. From an historical perspective, it can be said that traditional Chinese society was, for the most part, successful in achieving and enjoying peace and tranquility and maintaining political order.

1.12. The Modern Period of China

But no matter what peace, order and stability there had been in her long history, China's problems had become extremely complex by the early nineteenth century. This was primarily due to two closely interrelated factors: the internal weakness of the Ch'ing dynasty and the external encroachment of Western powers. However, for the purposes of our discussion, we shall follow this order: initial status quo, Western encroachment, Chinese reactions and a successful revolution versus deeper crises.

Initial Status Quo. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Ch'ing dynasty, while still strong on the surface, was already beginning to show symptoms of dynastic decline.

First, the morale of the imperial government began to show signs of deterioration.[15] Instead of performing their duties properly, the rulers began to lead a luxurious and debauched life. Corruption was rife at various levels within and outside the imperial court. Furthermore, it was not limited to the civil government; it also existed among military personnel, that is, among bannermen (who constituted the backbone of the military elite) and the Green Standard army (who were the rank and file). As a result, military morale also deteriorated and borders were no longer vigorously defended.[16]

Moreover, the extravagant expenses both of the civil government and of military exploits caused a steady increase in the national budget which was soon to become unbalanced. The enormous expenditures drained the state treasury, resulting in galloping inflation. The sharp increase in population without a corresponding increase in agricultural production aggravated the situation.[17] As a result, peasant life, which had already been hard to bear, was gradually reduced to a level of mere subsistence. Frequent natural calamities, such as floods, drought and locusts, caused tens of thousands of peasants to starve to death. Thus it was no wonder that peasant frustration and distress often took the form of violent insurrection. From time to time, large-scale peasant movements erupted, such as the White Lotus Sect in the eighteenth century, and the *Taiping* 太平 and *I-Hou T'uan* 義和團 movements in the nineteenth century.

All of these symptoms (official corruption, a decadent military, fiscal imbalance and social unrest) revealed clearly that the Ch'ing dynasty had already begun the inevitable process of dynastic decline and the elements of ultimate ruin had already set in. Economic pressure by Western powers was to accelerate this process further.

Western Encroachment. At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Western powers, urged on by their ever-expanding economic policy, began to knock at the gates of the Middle Kingdom and to demand the opening of her doors to trade. For centuries prior to the Opium War, China had lived in isolation, convinced of her cultural superiority. Her relations with other countries, which were considered by the Chinese as 'barbarians', were based on the tribute system, an unequal system in which China treated other countries as tributary states.[18] In order to break down China's closed doors and to improve the restrictive terms of trade, the British, as leaders of the Western world, decided to use force, thus triggering the so-called Opium War.[19] Then followed clashes between the British and Chinese armed forces. But, because of unequal military strength the war ended with a complete victory for the British. The doors of the lofty Middle Kingdom were finally forced open to a deluge of Western influence.

The example of Great Britain was followed closely by France, the United States, Germany, Russia and, above all, by Japan. The pressure of superior military strength forced China to conclude a number of unequal treaties with Western powers.[20] All the Western powers exacted economic concessions, and subsequently gained extra-territorial rights in many cities; China, in effect, allowed several 'foreign states' within her own territory over which her government had no jurisdiction.[21] All of this had immediate and devastating effects. As a result of her military defeat, economic concessions and unequal treaties, China in turn became a 'tributary state' to the Western powers. For the first time, China was forced to behave in a completely humiliating manner; indeed she was to lose her pride, superiority and eventually her self-confidence.

Chinese Reactions. Meanwhile, the Chinese response to Western encroachment was slow, uncertain and above all, ineffective. This was so because the people were handicapped by a weak and declining government, by their cultural superiority complex, as well as by military weakness. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Chinese response underwent four discernible stages of development: indignation, self-strengthening, reform and final collapse.

The Chinese reaction to the defeat of China in the Opium War was one of disbelief, anger and indignation, because the defeat was a crushing blow to their cultural ego. However, after the initial shock of humiliation, some of the progressive officials began to realize the need to build a strong military defense for China. They advocated strengthening the Chinese position by adopting Western military technology. This effort was known as the 'Self-strengthening' or 'Restoration' movement, led by two scholar-officials, Tseng Kuo-fan (曾國藩) and Li Hung-chang (李鴻章).[22] But, since their leaders still believed in traditional cultural superiority, their efforts were bound to be half-hearted and superficial.[23] As a result, the Restoration failed to produce an effect strong and fast enough to resist the increasing momentum of Western aggression, which reached its peak at the end of the nineteenth century.

In 1894 the Sino-Japanese war broke out and ended in China's complete defeat by Japan the next year, thus fully revealing the weaknesses of the Ch'ing dynasty to the world and to the Chinese people. More and more officials became convinced that the cause of China's humiliation and defeat were not only military inferiority but also the outdated political system of the Ch'ing dynasty. They began to advocate fundamental reform, that is, institutional reform – either in the form of a constitutional monarchy or of some other liberal type. Under the leadership of two prominent intellectuals, K'ang Yu-wei (康有爲) and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (梁啟超), a reform movement, in which the young and well-meaning Emperor, Kuang-hsü (光緒) (1875–1908) was an active figure, was launched. Unfortunately, due to the strong and hostile opposition of the ultra-conservative forces led by the Empress Dowager, the reform movement – which was known as the 'Reformation' – finally failed.[24]

With the failure of the Reformation, the final hour of the Ch'ing dynasty drew near. To compound the situation, the *I-Hou T'uan* movement ('the Righteous and Harmonious Fist' in Chinese, also known as 'the Boxer Rebellion' in the West) broke out in 1899. Led by their extreme xenophobic policy, they began to attack both Chinese Christians and foreigners. Emboldened by official support, they entered Peking in the summer of 1900 and seized the Legation Quarter of Peking. But the Western powers reacted swiftly and with force. An Allied expedition of the eight Western powers marched on Peking and totally defeated the *I-Hou T'uan.*[25] As a result, China was once again forced to sign the most humiliating treaty of all, the 'Boxer Protocol'.

After this, even the Empress Dowager became convinced of the urgent need for reform. She tried to put into effect a comprehensive, if inadequate, program of reform, including a new education system, modernized army and

navy, and above all, a constitutional form of government. According to this last item, a constitution was drafted in 1908, projecting plans for a constitutional monarchy. But the Empress Dowager and the reform Emperor, Kuang-hsü, died mysteriously in the same year.[26] Thus, these efforts proved to be too little too late. China was growing ripe for revolution.

A Successful Revolution Versus Deeper Crises. Revolutionary fervor began to rise by the early twentieth century. Revolutionary societies became widespread both within and outside the country. Among them, the most influential and best organized was the *T'ung-meng hui* 同盟會 established by Sun Yat-sen (孫中山) in 1905 in Japan,[27] and later re-organized into the Kuomintang (Nationalist Party). From 1905 to 1911 there were many abortive attempts at revolution,[28] which, although unsuccessful, had the effect of quickening the tempo of revolution on a national scale. Finally, the eleventh attempt at revolution succeeded on October 10, 1911 and the Republic of China was created. Meanwhile Sun, the leader of the revolution, was travelling in the United States, and he hastened back to China. On January 1, 1912 he was duly elected President of the Provisional Government.[29]

But the newly-born Republic could not give a new life to the people because it could not solve the deep-seated problems China had faced since the nineteenth century. In fact, the young Republic was beset by four crises: unstable government and warlordism, continued imperialism, social unrest and intellectual disintegration.

The first crisis was the unstable and impotent government. Within a year, the President of the provisional government, Sun, had to resign in favor of Yüan Shih-k'ai (袁世凱), who, through clever political maneuvering, was elected President of the Republic in March 1912.[30] But, being an opportunist, as soon as he became President, Yüan envisaged for himself the dream of absolute rule. By using his talent for intrigue, deception and foreign assistance (especially from Japan) he went as far as to declare a monarchy in 1915.[31] But this proved too much for the Chinese who had just overthrown the millenial monarchical system. Yüan's plot was short-lived, and he died the following year.

After the death of Yüan, China, while legally still under a central government in Peking, fell in fact into the hands of warlords.[32] During the period from 1916 to 1928 – known as the 'warlord period' – there were hundreds of warlords in the country. Although they came from different backgrounds, they had one thing in common: they were the products of war. They had personal armies, they imposed military rule on their territories and they

protected their interests by force. Driven by their own interests, they constantly fought among themselves. As a result, they brought about political and military fragmentation in China and reduced the central government in Peking to one of the warlord factions.[33] Such a state of chaos and instability served as an open invitation to the Western powers to continue their encroachment on the one hand, and on the other, brought terrible suffering to the Chinese people, especially to the poor peasants.

The second crisis was continued imperialism. The Revolution of 1911 did not affect the status or privileges of the Western powers. They could continue enjoying maximum profit from the privileges already permitted under the unequal treaties concluded during the Ch'ing dynasty. Furthermore, when the leaders of the young Republic, in their desperate search for financial help, turned to the Western powers, the latter took advantage of this opportunity. They invested huge sums of money directly into railroads, mines, various businesses and enterprises. All this aimed at achieving complete control over China's economy. Finally, in addition to financial aid, the Western powers also advanced their interests by supplying weapons to various warlords. As a matter of fact, many of the weapons with which warlord armies fought one another came from the same sources.[34] Thus warlords became the puppets of the Western powers, allowing the latter to tighten their control over China. Consequently, even after the success of the Revolution of 1911, China, instead of becoming an independent nation, actually became more and more dependent on the Western powers.

The third crisis was that as a result of warlordism and imperialism, China suffered from a deteriorating economy and social unrest. The economic difficulties which had afflicted the peasants in the nineteenth century were not only unsolved, they were aggravated. For, trying to fill its empty treasury, the central government increased taxes and levies. In rural areas, constant wars between warlords destroyed farms and crops, making agricultural production almost impossible. In addition, thousands of peasants were forced to become soldiers or carriers. All of this caused the most urgent problem of all, that of basic needs: food, clothing and shelter for the poor peasants.[35] This deep-seated problem gave rise to widespread social unrest and general frustration.

The fourth crisis was 'intellectual disintegration', created by two main factors: the rejection of Confucianism and the introduction of Western thought. First, ever since the Opium War, Confucian orthodoxy slowly but surely began to crumble. After the failure of the Restoration and the Reform, and especially after the Revolution of 1911, the weaknesses of Confucian

orthodoxy were fully exposed and it was rejected by Chinese intellectuals, who became increasingly iconoclastic or anti-traditional.[36]

The other factor was the introduction of Western thought to China. But this process of introducing Western thought was by no means smooth. Chinese intellectuals could not agree on which Western political theories and institutions were appropriate for China. At first (before 1917), various elements of Western political and social thought – under the name of Western democracy – became the subject of scrutiny and debate. During this period of debate, the most celebrated and revealing of these early conflicts was between Hu Shih (胡適) and Li Ta-chao (李大釗) over "problems vs. isms".[37] Such conflicts were further manifested and developed during and after the May Fourth Movement which was sometimes called the "Intellectual Revolution".[38]

When the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 succeeded in Russia, the process of introducing Western thought took a radical turn. Some of the more radical Chinese intellectuals were attracted by and later converted to Marxism. For they saw that the success of the Bolshevik Revolution symbolized not only the triumph of the people but also a new hope in the form of the anti-imperialist thrust of Leninism. Among these radical intellectuals were Ch'en Tu-hsiu (陳獨秀) and Li Ta-chao, two of the most influential intellectuals of the time.[39] Through them and their writings, Marxism was introduced and considered as another alternative to Western democracy, symbolized by the Western powers. Those intellectuals hoped that, as in Russia, Marxism could guide China to independent, modern statehood.

Thus, it is clear that Chinese intellectuals underwent a radical transformation in their values and thought from Confucianism to iconoclasm, to acceptance of Western democracy and finally to Marxism. However, to assimilate Western thought and Marxism was anything but easy, because these diverse ideas flowed in too quickly and were too new to be accepted readily. As a result, Chinese intellectuals in the early twentieth century had generally experienced a sense of loss, frustration and disintegration which became one of the major factors of the crises facing China after the Revolution of 1911. And this was the historical context in which Mao's life, which began in 1893, unfolded itself through the events of the twentieth century.

1.2. MAO TSE-TUNG: THE MAN

Mao Tse-tung was, and still is, considered as the symbol of the Chinese Communist revolution. He was one of the founders of the Chinese Communist

Party, established in 1921, and ever since then, his life had been bound up with its struggle, survival and victory. Indeed, during his lifetime, he became a spiritual leader in China, and even after his death, he still inspires hundreds of millions of Chinese. What kind of man was he? This section will attempt to answer this question. However, our purpose here is not to provide a detailed biography,[40] but rather to examine the important factors and events of Mao's life as related to the historical development of China in the twentieth century. We shall discuss Mao's life in five stages: the early years, the conversion to Marxism, the turning point – his rise to power, the victory of 1949 and the main events after 1949.

1.21. Early Years

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Mao's early years was his peasant background. He was born in a peasant family in the village of Shaoshan in Hunan province, on December 26, 1893. Mao, the eldest of four, had two younger brothers, Tse-tan and Tse-min, and one younger sister, Tse-hung.[41] Although his father had been a poor peasant for most of his life, he became an affluent farmer and at the same time a grain dealer while Mao was still a young child. Consequently, Mao grew up in a relatively comfortable home. But this did not prevent him from working on the farm at an early age,[42] like so many other farm boys of that time. Thus from a tender age, Mao experienced the hardships of the peasants; he saw them stricken by starvation during two famines which occurred in Hunan at the beginning of the twentieth century;[43] and he sympathized with them when they were mistreated by landlords. Such experiences of farm life would later enable Mao to understand the feelings of the peasants and to organize them into a unique revolutionary force.

Since his family was relatively better off, Mao was able to receive an education which was not available to most peasants. At the age of seven, he began to attend his native primary school, where he acquired a basic knowledge of the Confucian classics. But his father had no intention of making Mao a scholar, but only of letting him acquire enough of an education to be able to read and to keep simple accounts. Rebelling against paternal authority at the age of thirteen,[44] Mao had a variety of experiences. He attended a higher primary school in a neighboring town; he joined the revolutionary army in 1911 in Hunan for six months;[45] he spent some months reading classical and Western books in the provincial library; and, finally, he decided to become a teacher. In 1913, Mao entered the First Teacher's Training School, or Normal School, in Changsha and graduated there five years later.[46] This period was

important for Mao's intellectual formation. For it was there that Mao not only mastered the traditional classics, history and literature, but also came in contact with Western thought. While at the Normal School, Mao also became politically aware. He acquired his first experience in political activity by helping to establish several student organizations. The most important of them was the New People's Study Society in 1917, some of whose members were later to join the Chinese Communist Party and to follow Mao's leadership until final victory in 1949.

1.22. Conversion to Marxism

Mao's conversion to Marxism seemed relatively simple, for it was completed within three years. As soon as he graduated from the Normal School in 1918, he went to Peking, the intellectual center of China at that time. For half a year he worked as a library aide at Peking University.[47] It was there that he came under the influence of Li Ta-chao and Ch'en Tu-hsiu, who were to become the principal figures in founding the Chinese Communist Party. Moreover, his stay in Peking coincided with the months leading to the so-called May Fourth Movement of 1919, which, though it started as a political demonstration against Japan, soon came to symbolize a period of rapid political, social, and cultural change. The younger generation was aroused and became more and more involved in political activities. Awakened to political consciousness, Mao returned to Changsha in March 1919,[48] where he helped to establish a variety of organizations that brought the students together with the workers and the merchants. He also organized demonstrations to force the government to oppose Japan.

In the winter of 1919, Mao returned to Peking, where he began to read the few available Chinese translations of Marxist texts,[49] and to associate with other Leftist intellectuals, eventually becoming committed to Marxism. With this newly found ideology, Mao returned once again to his native province and organized a small Communist group there.[50] In the Summer of 1921, Mao went to Shanghai to attend the first meeting of representatives from other Communist groups all over the country. Thus Mao became one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, though he did not play a leading role at that time.[51]

1.23. The Turning Point: Mao's Rise to Power in 1935

After the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao became a 'professional' revolutionary; and his life was henceforward bound up with the life of the Chinese Communist Party. However, from 1921 to 1935, Mao's

role in the Chinese Communist Party was only secondary, though not unimportant. His supreme authority in the Chinese Communist Party was not recognized until January 1935 at the Tsunji Conference. The historical development of this period can be seen from two major events: the first united front between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party, and Mao's rise to power.

As early as 1920, the Comintern was seeking collaborators in China. On the one hand, they helped to establish the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and, on the other, they reached a Sino-Russian agreement with Sun and his Kuomintang in 1923.[52] As a result, the first united front between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party was formed. The Kuomintang would receive, among other things, both financial and political aid from Russia in order to reorganize the Kuomintang, while the members of the Chinese Communist Party could join the Kuomintang on an individual basis. Thus, Mao, with other members of the Chinese Communist Party, joined the Kuomintang and he became an alternate member of its Central Executive Committee.[53] With this new status, Mao worked at co-ordinating the Kuomintang-Chinese Communist Party activities; he edited the *Political Daily* of the Kuomintang, served as head of the Kuomintang propaganda committee, and trained cadres from all over the country in organizational techniques.

For the first few years, the united front between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party seemed to work remarkably well; but it did not last too long. Beneath the surface there was much latent dissension and distrust on both sides. This mutual disenchantment led to a crack in the united front with the death of Sun, the father of the Kuomintang, in 1925 and the assumption of power by Chiang Kai-shek. However, since both sides wanted to unify China which was still divided, the Northern Expedition of unification was launched in July 1926. As the Northern Expedition proceeded successfully, Chiang, because of his suspicion and fear of the Chinese Communist Party, staged a pre-emptive coup-d'état, by massacring thousands of workers and members of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai on April 12, 1927.[54] Then a wholesale liquidation of the Communists began, first in Shanghai and then in other major cities, lasting for several months. Thus the first united front, which was precarious from the start, collapsed completely.

The second major event during this period was the 'line-struggle' in the Chinese Communist Party. Basically, there were two 'lines', concerning how revolution in China should be conducted. One was the orthodox policy, controlled by 'pro-Moscow' or 'Moscow-trained' leaders of the Chinese

Communist Party; and the other was Mao's 'unorthodox' approach. According to the former, the revolution had to be based on the urban proletariat. Since the workers were most revolutionary, they had to have a key role in bringing about a revolution in China. Consequently, they insisted that the members of the Chinese Communist Party work primarily in cities, to organize workers and to heighten their political consciousness. When the time was ripe, the workers would take up arms, sparking off a revolution and attracting others to its banners. For the first decade and a half after the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, this orthodox policy was consistently followed, but unfortunately with great losses. For instance, Chiang's massacre on April 12, 1927 almost wiped out the Chinese Communist Party. Again, when a group of the members of the Chinese Communist Party staged a coup at Nanchang, Kiangsi, on August 1, 1927, they had control of the city for only a few days, after which they were totally crushed.[55] Similar incidents happened in Canton in December 1927; and in Hunan in July 1930.

Mao's approach, on the other hand, was considered unorthodox, a departure from the official policy. Mao was convinced that revolution in China should be based on the peasantry, because China was essentially an agrarian country. Since the peasants were the most potent revolutionary force, the members of the Chinese Communist Party should go to the countryside. There they should organize the peasants and increase their political consciousness. Mao's investigation into peasant movements in early 1927 in Hunan[56] led him to this firm conviction. From his investigation, he concluded, "Several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back."[57]

After Chiang's 1927 massacre, the members of the Chinese Communist Party were almost annihilated in the cities and decimated in the countryside. But the top Party leaders persisted in following their orthodox policy and retreated to Shanghai and other cities. On the other hand, Mao, together with Chu Teh, retreated to *Ching kang Shan*, the mountain areas between Hunan and Kiangsi in August 1927.[58] There they began to embark on a new type of revolutionary warfare in which the Red Army of the peasants would play the central role. They also began to establish so-called 'Soviet areas', where land reform and other Communist policies were put into practice. Although Mao's action was viewed by the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and Moscow (Stalin) as unorthodox and heretical, it was tolerated because all the latter's orthodox policies had failed. As the Soviet areas in Kiangsi and Hunan were further developed and expanded, Mao's approach began to be

recognized as legitimate in 1928 by some leaders of the Chinese Communist Party.[59]

Meanwhile, the gradual building up of the Soviet areas did not escape Chiang's attention. Alert to the threat of the Red Army, Chiang began his series of five extermination campaigns from 1930 to 1935.[60] However, the first four of these campaigns produced no significant effect. Angered and frustrated, Chiang mobilized 900,000 troops (of whom perhaps 400,000 actively took part) for the fifth campaign, hoping to surround and destroy the Communists once and for all. Seeing the danger of annihilation, Mao and his colleagues decided to abandon the Soviet areas in Kiangsi and Hunan, and set out for the Northwest of China on what is known as the 'Long March'. It was during this Long March, particularly at the Tsunji Conference held in January 1935,[61] that the doomed orthodox policies of the Moscow-trained leaders were rejected, and at the same time, Mao's supreme authority in the Chinese Communist Party was recognized. From then on, Mao assumed the direction of the Long March and selected Northern Shensi as its destination. After marching and fighting on a circuitous route of almost 6,000 miles, surviving many perils and hardships, Mao, with a few thousand of his troops, arrived in Northern Shensi in the latter part of 1935. After a brief rest, Mao moved his men to Yenan in early 1936, where he began to set up new and permanent Soviet areas, and continued to fight for the cause of revolution.

1.24. The Victory of 1949

The period from 1936 to 1949 was entirely dominated by wars – first the Sino-Japanese War and then civil war. Japanese aggression, which actually began in Manchuria in 1931, was accelerated by Japan's overt invasion, triggered by an incident at Marco Polo Bridge or *Lu-Kou Ch'iao* 蘆溝橋 on July 7, 1937.[62] Once hostilities broke out, all hope for a peaceful settlement vanished. But what Japan intended as a short battle to conquer North China turned out to be a protracted eight-year war.

On the other hand, Chiang who had tolerated or acquiesced to the ongoing Japanese aggression since 1931, was determined to fight and to destroy the Chinese Communist Party. His basic policy was "Unify before resisting". Its rationale was that before resisting Japanese aggression, it was necessary to unify China by wiping out the Chinese Communist Party. But Chiang's "Unify before resisting" policy was counteracted by the "Unify by resisting" policy of the Chinese Communist Party. Mao and his colleagues proposed that the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party stop fighting each other and unite to resist Japanese aggression. Meanwhile, popular anti-Japanese

feelings were running high. It was then that the "Sian Incident" – in which Chiang was kidnapped by his military leaders in Northeastern China – accelerated the evolution of the second Kuomintang-Chinese Communist Party united front, with formal agreement being announced in September 1937.[63]

Then followed the hard and cruel anti-Japanese war which lasted eight years. During this period, Mao was preoccupied with two important things – the strategy against Japan and the consolidation of the Yenan Soviet areas. Overpowered by Japanese military superiority, Mao realized that the Chinese Communist Party could not fight a regular war with the Japanese forces; rather they should adopt a strategy of 'guerilla warfare'.[64] Therefore, the Communists broke their armies up into small units and sent them behind the enemy lines. They tried to control effectively vast areas of the countryside, stretching between the cities, and the communication lines being used by the Japanese. With such tactics, the Communists not only expanded their military forces, but also established effective grass-roots ties with a vast population. In addition to military strategy, Mao also devoted himself to reflection and writing, in order to meet the urgent need for training the new members of the Chinese Communist Party. Thus, many of his important writings, including 'On Practice' (1937), 'On Contradiction' (1937) and 'New Democracy' (1940), were produced at this time. Furthermore, it was also during this period that Mao's leadership in the Chinese Communist Party was once more challenged by Wang Ming (王明 who had just returned from a long stay in Moscow) and Chang Kuo-tao (張國燾 who had refused to accept Mao's political and military policies).[65] Hence arose the debates over the "Sinification of Marxism" in October 1938, and over the "Rectification Campaign" in 1942. These challenges not only did not weaken Mao's position and prestige, but further confirmed and strengthened his supreme authority in the Chinese Communist Party.[66]

When World War II was drawing to its end, both the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party were preparing for civil war. As a matter of fact, the second united front had begun to fall apart in 1941. For, alarmed by the expansion of the Chinese Communist Party in rural areas, Chiang had already secretly massed his forces to blockade the Soviet areas in the Northwest. By August 1945, when the Japanese surrendered, the second united front existed only in name. Although the next year was spent in a desperate attempt to save the situation, especially by the American special envoy, General G. C. Marshall, all efforts proved unrealistic and futile. At the end of 1946, Marshall declared his mission a failure.[67]

Then followed the civil war of 1947 to 1949, which brought final victory

to the Communists. Indeed, from the start, the outcome of the civil war was a foregone conclusion. Although Chiang's armies had greatly superior equipment and outnumbered the Communists, their loose discipline, corruption, and low morale made them impotent. On the other hand, Mao's armies, although poorly equipped and outnumbered, had high morale and were well organized. After all, they enjoyed wider popular support in vast rural areas. However, the events from 1946 to 1949 developed much faster than anybody could have expected. Early in 1949, Chiang moved the Kuomintang government to Taiwan.[68] Nanking fell in April; and within a few months, the entire country fell under Communist control. On October 1, 1949 Mao stood up at Tien-an Men Square to declare the birth of the People's Republic of China.

1.25. Main Events after 1949

With the birth of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao's life underwent a significant change in style – from the life of a guerilla leader to that of a leader of a vast modern state. As the head of the state, Mao had to deal with enormous problems, both new and complex, that China immediately faced. Without any previous experience in this kind of administration, Mao and his colleagues had to learn how to manage a modern state – politically, socially, and above all, economically. Indeed, there were many mistakes. But overall, China progressed gradually yet steadily toward becoming a strong, independent state. Since it is impossible to treat in detail the numerous events of Mao's life during this period, we shall examine China's developments as guided by Mao during four general periods: from 1949 to 1958, from 1959 to 1965, from 1966 to 1970 and from 1970 to 1976.

1949–1958. Soon after the inauguration of the People's Republic of China, Mao travelled for the first time to Moscow to seek the financial aid that was sorely needed to reconstruct his ruined country. After two months of arduous negotiations – which was much longer than he expected[69] – Mao succeeded in obtaining limited economic aid. With this assistance, China began building a 'socialism' after the Soviet model, involving centralized planning of the economy as a whole with an emphasis on heavy industry. In the countryside, the various stages of land reform and the three-phase collectivization also were similar to those used by the Soviet Union.[70]

Although Mao had his reservations in regard to this Soviet-modelled economic policy, nevertheless, without any experience in economic development, he could not offer any alternative. From 1949 to 1955, Mao rarely appeared in public except for delivering speeches and signing official decrees

as head of state. But, beginning in July 1955, Mao began to appear in public once again and seemed determined to change the basic policy of economic development, by calling for greater emphasis on agriculture. For the next four years, Mao constantly and boldly asserted his own ideas on economic development, often against the opposition of his senior colleagues. In the Winter of 1955, Mao advocated rapid collectivization; in the Spring of 1956, he launched the policy of "Letting a Hundred Flowers Bloom"; in February 1957, he gave his celebrated speech, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People'; in the Autumn of 1957, he proposed a new policy known as the "Great Leap Forward".[71] Furthermore, in the face of dwindling Soviet assistance in the late 1950's,[72] Mao became convinced that the Soviet-model economic policy had to be abandoned in favor of a Chinese-model economic policy. Mao advocated then that agriculture should be the backbone of China's economy in general while heavy industry should be developed to serve agriculture. Consequently, China's economic development should be based on small, local enterprises, rather than capital-intensive programs. For this purpose, the 'People's Commune' system was introduced in the Summer of 1958. By all of these actions, Mao intended to develop a new economic policy which would suit the concrete conditions in China.

1959–1965. But not all of the proposed policies turned out as well as Mao expected. During this period, two serious problems developed: one internal and the other external.

Internally, the Great Leap Forward slowed industrial (economic) production; the rapid introduction of the commune system, combined with a series of natural disasters, led to a severe food shortage in the early 1960s. Consequently, mounting opposition from Mao's colleagues forced him to 'retreat'. In 1959, Mao resigned from the post of Chairman of the State, though he still remained Chairman of the Party.[73] Externally, Sino-Soviet relations went from bad to worse, eventually deteriorating into open conflict. In 1960, the withdrawal of Soviet technicians together with their blueprints brought disruption to China's entire industrial development. In response to such pressure, Mao deliberately opted for a totally independent political-economic policy, though some of the leaders who seemed pro-Soviet went along only reluctantly.

As a result of all of these complex internal and external circumstances, serious disagreements began to develop among the Chinese leaders, between Mao and a group led by Liu Shao-chi (who replaced him as Chairman of the State). On the one hand, Mao stressed a Chinese model which emphasized

agriculture rather than industry, local enterprises rather than city-centered enterprises, total independence from Russia rather than dependence. On the other hand, Liu's group seemed to favor a more orthodox Soviet model which preferred industry to agriculture, city-centered enterprises to local enterprises, Soviet cooperation to total independence. Such a fundamental difference eventually developed into two opposing 'lines', which were resolved only by the Great Cultural Revolution.

1966–1969. During this period, the Cultural Revolution took place and its general developments seemed clear, though its details were often obscure. But what were the goals of the Cultural Revolution? Or why did Mao resort to using the Cultural Revolution?

The urgent problems China faced in 1965, according to Mao, were four crises: (1) the leadership crisis, as indicated above, between two 'lines', led by Mao and Liu, respectively, (2) the Sino-Soviet crisis, as developed into an open dispute between two Communist giants, (3) the crisis of 'bureaucratization' or elite class, as represented by top leaders of the Party, and (4) the need to cultivate, both among the leaders and the people, socialist values such as the importance of manual work and of mass participation. Furthermore, these four problems were all intertwined and reinforced one another. In other words, in the mid-1960s, Mao realized that China was in danger of changing her 'socialist color'. The main cause was the emergence of a new elite class of bureaucrats, consisting of the top leaders of the Party with Soviet leanings, who seemed to have followed a revisionist, or semi-capitalist road to social transformation. To resolve this, Mao decided to go to the masses directly (i.e., students, workers, farmers, party officials and the army), and through the dynamic interaction of the masses, China could be saved from pursuing a semi-capitalist policy.

But, to form a policy or theory is one thing; to have it implemented successfully in practice is another. The Cultural Revolution was anything but easy; its entire course ran more than three years and can be divided into four phases. It actually began in Shanghai in November 1965, and gradually moved toward Peking.[74] The initial phase was low-keyed, with publication of a series of articles, attacking cultural and educational commissars and the Party officials in Peking. Then, the second phase (of Red Guards) followed in May 1966, characterized by 'wall-posters' everywhere (beginning at Peking University). With Mao's endorsement, Red Guards spread all over the nation within a short time. They were told that 'to rebel is right' and 'dare to be violent'. They not only organized mass rallies, marching to Peking,[75] but also criticized

and in some cases even attacked the Party officials. In this way, they created enormous confusion, disorder and violence. Whereupon followed the third phase, beginning in January 1967. It was a period of 'power struggle' (or 'seizure of power') and 'anti-power struggle' (or 'anti-seizure of power'). Since much disturbance and violence resulted, the army had to be called in to maintain order. After almost one year of such struggle for power, the fourth phase of 'tidying up' began in January 1969 and ended in April 1969. As soon as order was re-established, the Red Guards and other rebels were encouraged to go back to where they had come from; in many cases, they were sent back. The new policy of 'building the Party' was vigorously pursued. In April 1969, with the convocation of the ninth Party Congress, the Cultural Revolution officially came to an end.[76]

Judged by any standard, the Cultural Revolution was a daring and risky decision. From the outset, Mao intended to use the masses to resolve the four crises mentioned above: leadership, Sino-Soviet dispute, elitism and cultivation of socialist values. Viewed from this perspective, the Cultural Revolution seemed to have achieved its main goals. On the one hand, the new elite class of Party bureaucrats with Soviet leanings was removed from the leadership; those on top – through a periodic return to the masses[77] – got rid of their attitudes of arrogant superiority and acquired a close relationship with the people. On the other hand, the masses were asked to participate in the very process of socialization and politicization; in the process, they, after having acquired a set of socialist values, became politically sensitive to any deviation from their socialist road.

However, there were also side-effects of the Cultural Revolution such as the setbacks in economic and educational areas, which any comprehensive evaluation of the Cultural Revolution must also take into consideration.[78]

1970–1976. This period covers the last six years of Mao's life. Although Mao was afflicted by old age and illness and made few public appearances, he was by no means inactive. In fact, during this period, many significant events took place which were all under his control; two among them were of particular importance, one domestic and one foreign.

The domestic event was the 'Lin Piao Affair', or the fall of Lin Piao. Lin, who became the Minister of Defense in 1959, began to rise rapidly to extraordinary prominence when Mao sought his support in initiating the Cultural Revolution in the early 1960s. Throughout the Cultural Revolution, Lin displayed almost 'blind' support for Mao and his followers, especially the Red Guards. Furthermore, through the official apparatus of the military and

through the publication of millions of 'Red Books', Lin exalted Mao's Thought to such an extent as to create a nationwide 'personality cult'.[79] Although Mao realized Lin's extreme zeal, nevertheless he tolerated him because he needed Lin's staunch support and perhaps also a 'personality cult' in order to overthrow Liu Shao-ch'i and his adherents within the Party, both on the central and local levels. After the Cultural Revolution, Lin's power and prestige seemed to have reached its peak. His name was written by Mao (or at least with Mao's permission) into the new Constitution of the Party in 1969 as the Chairman's "close comrade-in-arms and successor", as well as the sole Vice-Chairman of the Party.[80]

But, it was not long before Mao realized that there was a new 'danger' here: instead of the Party controlling the gun, the gun seemed to be controlling the Party. This danger was manifested by (1) more than 40% of the full members of the Central Committee of the Ninth Party Congress in 1969 were military,[81] and (2) Lin's ambition to exalt his own authority above the Party. In other words, military control was not Mao's original intent, as the army was called upon to restore order only as a temporary expedient. Therefore, in order to correct this dangerous situation, Mao began a series of moves, hoping to 'cure the disease but save the patient'. But, Mao's efforts, apparently, were fruitless, because the next thing (as far as we know) was that a plane with Lin and his family on board crashed in Mongolia on September 13, 1971. Although the whole truth of the Lin-Piao Affair may never become known,[82] it was certain that following his death, Mao and China entered a new era of moderation.

In connection with this, it must be pointed out that Mao (and Chou) were never able to resolve the problem of succession. With the benefit of hindsight, it is known that twice Mao tried to make arrangements for a peaceful succession and twice failed. Both would-be successors, namely Liu and Lin, caused tremendous damage to the Party and the country. The present situation, with Hua Kuo-feng as Chairman and Teng Hsiao-p'ing as Vice Premier (who has real power), is by no means stable; and indeed the problem of succession will continue to be a focus of tension in the years to come.

The second major event during this period was the so-called 'Ping-pong Diplomacy', which marked a dramatic shift in China's approach to Sino-U.S. relations. Such a shift was an extraordinary development with far-reaching impact not only on China herself but also on the world at large. Its significance becomes even more obvious when seen from an historical perspective.

As soon as the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, she adopted the policy of 'leaning to one side', namely, toward the Soviet Union.

At the same time, China considered the United States as the number 1 enemy, especially after the Korean War. However, Sino-Soviet friendship did not last long. Beginning with the second half of the 1950s, a series of events both in domestic and foreign areas prompted Mao to re-assess China's policy of 'leaning to one side'. As a result, the Sino-Soviet relationship began to show the strain. After the withdrawal of the Soviet technicians together with their blueprints (as mentioned above), this strained relationship finally became an open conflict.[83] For the next decade, the situation deteriorated steadily and rapidly. Meanwhile, old border conflicts between the two countries gave rise to renewed Sino-Soviet troop skirmishes along the borders. In 1969, military clashes along the Ussuri River nearly developed into a full-scale war.

All of these developments convinced Mao that the Soviet Union had already become both 'revisionist' and 'socialist imperialist', thus posing a real military threat to China's security; and that China must take the necessary steps to defend herself and to pursue an independent road to socialism. To achieve this, Mao realized that although the United States was still the leader of capitalism, good Sino-U.S. relations would be 'desirable', at this historical juncture for two reasons: first, to offset the Soviet threat to China's security and, second, to enable China to seek a variety of help – technological, scientific, financial – needed for her industrialization.[84]

Convinced of its necessity, Mao made one of his boldest political decisions – to initiate the 'Ping-pong Diplomacy', a total reversal of China's foreign policy toward the United States. Through careful but secret negotiations, this momentous decision eventually led Henry Kissinger and President Richard Nixon to Peking, resulting in the Shanghai Communiqué in 1972; and finally to the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the United States in January 1979. Unfortunately, Mao did not live to witness this last event, and died in September 1976.

This completes our account of Mao's life, which is interwoven with the life of the Chinese Communist Party, as well as with that of the People's Republic of China. By any standard, Mao's place in history is secure. His greatness seems to lie in his total dedication and ability to create a new society for China. The fact that China has now become politically independent, economically 'progressive', and socially equal, speaks for itself. But to affirm China's progress is not to say that China is a perfect society or a model for other nations. With her shortcomings and defects, China has still a long way to go toward achieving an ever-better society.

CHAPTER 2

MAO'S METHODOLOGY AND POINT OF DEPARTURE

The importance of methodology in philosophy has long been recognized. Not only is a philosophy conditioned by its method, but also the very method becomes an integral part of that philosophy. This is especially true of Mao's philosophy and methodology. Both Mao's philosophy and methodology are 'unsystematic' or 'unstructured' in the sense that they are not formulated in any systematic treatise – as is so common in Western philosophy. In this chapter, we are mainly concerned with Mao's methodology, which will be explained in three parts. We shall begin with the textual basis for Mao's method, contained in his various philosophical writings. Then we shall present Mao's methodology itself, extracted or derived from these philosophical writings. Finally, we shall discuss Mao's point of departure. All this serves as a necessary background for understanding Mao's theory of dialectic.

2.1. TEXTUAL BASIS

Being a Chinese thinker, Mao never paid special attention to methodology as such prior to his philosophical inquiry. He simply philosophized, and in so doing, his very method was contained in his philosophical writings. Therefore, it is difficult but possible – by studying Mao's various philosophical writings – to arrive at Mao's method of philosophizing.[1] His method seems to emphasize *'huo-hsüeh'* (活學) and *'huo-yung'* (活用), or *'huo-hsüeh huo-yung'*, which can be literally translated as 'living learning and living application', or 'dynamic learning and dynamic application', or 'flexible analysis and flexible application according to existential circumstances', or 'concrete analysis and concrete application according to existential circumstances'. Before we try to explore the nature of Mao's method, let us present the most important texts that will deal first with 'huo-hsüeh' and then with 'huo-yung'. Concerning the former, Mao writes:

> There are two different attitudes toward learning from others. One is the dogmatic attitude of transplanting everything, whether or not it is suited to our conditions. This is no good. The other attitude is to use our heads and learn those things which suit our conditions, that is, to absorb whatever experience is useful to us. That is the attitude we should adopt.[2]

Our comrades must understand that we study Marxism-Leninism not for display, nor because there is any mystery about it, but solely because it is the science which leads the revolutionary cause of the proletariat to victory. Even now, there are not a few people who still regard odd quotations from Marxist-Leninist works as a ready-made panacea which, once acquired, can easily cure all maladies. These people show childish ignorance, and we should enlighten them. It is precisely such ignorant people who take Marxism-Leninism as a religious dogma. To them we should say bluntly, 'Your dogma is worthless'.[3]

Many comrades seem to study Marxism-Leninism not to meet the needs of revolutionary practice, but purely for the sake of study. Consequently, though they read, they cannot digest. They can only cite odd quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in a one-sided manner, but are unable to apply the stand, viewpoint and method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to the concrete study of China's present condition and her history or to the concrete analysis and solution of the problems of the Chinese revolution. Such an attitude towards Marxism-Leninism does a great deal of harm, particularly among cadres of the middle and higher ranks.[4]

Our comrades in the Party School should not regard Marxist theory as a lifeless dogma. It is necessary to master Marxist theory and apply it, master it for the sole purpose of applying . . . Our Party School should also lay down the rule to grade students good or poor according to how they look at China's problems after they have studied Marxism-Leninism, according to whether or not they see the problems clearly and whether or not they see them at all.[5]

Our achievements on the theoretical front will be very poor indeed if, as members of the Communist Party of China, we close our eyes to China's problems and can only memorize isolated conclusions or principles from Marxist writings. If all a person can do is to commit Marxist economics or philosophy to memory, reciting glibly from Chapter I to Chapter X, but is utterly unable to apply them, can he be considered a Marxist theorist? No, he cannot. What kind of theorists do we want? We want theorists who can, in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method, correctly interpret the practical problems arising in the course of history and revolution and give scientific explanation and theoretical elucidations of China's economic, political, military, cultural and other problems. Such are the theorists we want. To be a theorist of this kind, a person must have a true grasp of the essence of Marxism-Leninism, of the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method, and of the theories of Lenin and Stalin on the colonial revolutions and the Chinese revolution, and he must be able to apply them in a penetrating and scientific analysis of China's practical problems and discover the laws of development of these problems. Such are the theorists we really need.[6]

These are but a few of the many passages which express the idea of 'huo-hsüeh', flexible learning. Mao emphasizes that learning anything, including Marxism-Leninism, involves an attitude which is both flexible and critical. Mao encourages the Chinese Communists to avoid "the dogmatic attitude of transplanting everything" blindly to China, but rather adopt a flexible

method "to use our heads and learn those things which suit our conditions."[7] This flexible and critical method of learning is especially important in studying Marxism-Leninism, which is, Mao repeats, not a 'lifeless dogma' or a 'religious dogma' or a 'ready-made panacea'. Thus Mao strongly opposes those self-proclaimed (Chinese) Marxists who can only "memorize isolated conclusions or principles from Marxist writings", "reciting glibly from Chapter I to Chapter X". "Flexible learning" demands not only that one read Marxism-Leninism, but also that he read them 'with his head', that is, intelligently and critically.[8] In other words, instead of memorizing isolated conclusions or principles from Marxism-Leninism, we should try to understand and digest them; only then can we accept and assimilate what is good and useful to the Chinese situation.

On 'huo-yung', 'flexible application', Mao writes:

> The military manuals issued in many countries point both to the necessity of a 'flexible application of principles according to circumstances', and to the measures to be taken in case of defeat. They point out the former in order to warn a commander against subjectively committing mistakes through too rigid an application of principles, and to the latter in order to enable him to cope with the situation after he has committed subjective mistakes or after unexpected and irresistible changes have occurred in the objective circumstances.[9]

> Let us discuss flexibility. What is flexibility? It is the concrete realization of the initiative in military operations; it is the flexible employment of armed forces. The flexible employment of armed forces is the central task in directing a war, a task more difficult to perform well . . . There are various tactics or methods for giving effect to this principle, such as dispersion and concentration of forces, diverging advance and converging attack, the offensive and the defensive, assault and containment, encirclement and outflanking, advance and retreat. It is easy to understand these tactics, but not at all easy to employ and vary them flexibly. Here the three crucial links are the time, the place and the troops. No victory can be won unless the time, the place and the troops are well chosen.[10]

> The ancients said: 'Ingenuity in varying tactics depends on mother wit'. This 'ingenuity', which is what we mean by flexibility, is the contribution of the intelligent commander. Flexibility does not mean recklessness; recklessness must be rejected. Flexibility consists in the intelligent commander's ability to take timely and appropriate measures on the basis of objective conditions after 'judging the hour and sizing up the situation' (the 'situation' includes the enemy's situation, our situation and the terrain), and this flexibility is 'ingenuity in varying tactics'.[11]

> Being Marxists, Communists are internationalists, but we can put Marxism into practice only when it is integrated with the specific characteristics of our country and acquires a definite national form. The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies precisely in its integration with the concrete revolutionary practice of all countries. For the Chinese

Communist Party, it is a matter of learning to apply the theory of Marxism-Leninism to the specific circumstances of China. For the Chinese Communists who are part of the great Chinese nation, flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood, any talk about Marxism in isolation from China's characteristics is merely Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in a vacuum. Hence to apply Marxism concretely in China so that its every manifestation has an indubitably Chinese character, i.e., to apply Marxism in the light of China's specific characteristics, becomes a problem which it is urgent for the whole Party to understand and solve. Foreign stereotypes must be abolished, there must be less singing of empty, abstract tunes, and dogmatism must be laid to rest; they must be replaced by the fresh, lively Chinese style and spirit which the common people of China love.[12]

To advocate 'wholesale Westernization' is wrong. China has suffered a great deal from the mechanical absorption of foreign material. Similarly, in applying Marxism to China, Chinese Communists must fully and properly integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, or in other words, the universal truth of Marxism must be combined with specific national characteristics and acquire a definite national form if it is to be useful, and in no circumstances can it be applied subjectively as a mere formula. Marxists who make a fetish of formulas are simply playing the fool with Marxism and the Chinese revolution, and there is no room for them in the ranks of the Chinese revolution.[13]

In these and other similar passages, Mao is equally emphatic about flexibility in applying what is learned. For he sees the absolute necessity of "a flexible application of principles according to circumstances". Therefore, different situations and circumstances give rise to different problems and contradictions which in turn demand different solutions. Otherwise, setbacks and mistakes will result. That is why in China's concrete situation, Mao vehemently opposes "wholesale Westernization", by "the mechanical absorption of foreign material", including Marxism-Leninism. Since Marxism-Leninism for Mao is never abstract or in a vacuum, the Chinese Communists must "fully and properly integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese Revolution".[14] In other words, "the universal truth of Marxism must be combined with specific national characteristics and acquire a definite national form",[15] a point Mao has emphasized repeatedly. For it is wrong for Chinese Marxists to "make a fetish of formulas" of Marxism, because they "are simply playing the fool with Marxism and the Chinese revolution". It is imperative, then, that "foreign stereotypes must be abolished, there must be less singing of empty, abstract tunes, and dogmatism must be laid to rest; they must be replaced by the fresh, lively Chinese style and spirit which the common people of China love."[16]

From all of this we can see that both in learning and in applying what is learned, Mao emphasizes *flexibility* with a critical *sensitivity*. As far as learning

is concerned, flexibility means two things: one, to reject rote memorization of isolated and rigid dogmas, and the other, to absorb what is to be learned critically and intelligently. As to applying what is learned, flexibility involves also two things: one, to reject the dogmatic attitude of mechanically transplanting foreign stereotypes, and the other, to "take timely and appropriate measures according to the specific, concrete circumstances". In either case, flexibility is the key.[17] But this goal is not easily achieved in concrete situations and circumstances because it demands 'ingenuity' which involves a near perfect combination of time, place and circumstances. Clearly, Mao's concern for 'timely and appropriate' measures according to concrete social and historical circumstances, as expressed throughout his writing, gives us a sound textual key to the origins of his methodology.

2.2 MAO'S METHODOLOGY

With this textual basis in hand we shall now synthesize the four essential elements of Mao's method in order to understand its full meaning.

2.21. Synthetic Perspective

The first essential characteristic of Mao's method is its synthetic perspective which follows a 'whole-part-whole' approach. Influenced by the Chinese approach to philosophy, Mao always understands reality (a situation or event) as the whole rather than as parts. That is, he never views any situation or event in terms of isolated aspects, but always in its totality. In explaining the laws of war, Mao puts great emphasis on the whole, saying, "wherever there is war, there is a war situation as a whole . . . The task of the science of strategy is to study those laws for directing a war that govern a war situation as a whole . . . because an understanding of the whole facilitates the handling of the part, and because the part is subordinate to the whole."[18] Since the parts are subordinate to the whole, in analyzing its parts, one must analyze them in their totality, that is, in the context of the whole. When discussing leadership, Mao seems to stress this point:

> (Leaders) must consider the situation as a whole, think in terms of the majority of the people and work together with their allies. They must grasp the principle of subordinating the needs of the part to the needs of the whole. If a proposal appears feasible for a partial situation but not for the situation as a whole, then the part must give way to the whole. Conversely, if the proposal is not feasible for the part but is feasible in the light of the situation as a whole, again the part must give way to the whole. This is what is meant by understanding the situation as a whole.[19]

Thus since the whole has priority over the part, the part must always give way to the whole. But how can this be done? To put due emphasis on the whole, one must study a situation or event not from a one-sided perspective, but from all different sides. As Mao says:

> In studying a problem, we must shun . . . one-sidedness . . . To be one-sided, for example, to understand only China but not Japan, only the Communist Party but not the Kuomintang, only the Proletariat but not the bourgeoisie, only the peasant but not the landlords, only the favorable conditions but not the difficult ones, only the past but not the future, only individual parts but not the whole, only the defects but not the achievements, only the plaintiff's case but not the defendant's, only secret revolutionary work but not open revolutionary work, and so on . . . This is what we mean by looking at a problem one-sidedly. Or it may be called seeing the part but not the whole, seeing the trees but not the forest.[20]

Mao's point is clear. It is "all-sidedness", "the whole not the part" or "the forest not the trees", that is of ultimate importance.

However, while emphasizing the whole, Mao does not deny the parts, but maintains that the parts should be understood as parts of the whole. In other words, to understand the parts one must understand the whole; to understand the whole, one must understand its parts. In fact, the whole and its parts are inseparable and therefore should be understood dialectically. No situation or event as a whole can be detached from its parts, because the whole is made up of all of its parts.[21]

Therefore, according to Mao, anyone who does not follow this 'whole-part-whole' approach, will very likely commit grave errors. Many cadres fall into the trap of intra-party sectarianism, because they "see only the interest of the part and not the whole; they always put undue stress on the part of the work for which they themselves are responsible and always wish to subordinate the interests of the whole to the interests of their own part."[22] In order to avoid such a mistake, one should take a comprehensive view of the situation as a whole and link the interests of the part with those of the whole.[23] In other words, no correct and in-depth understanding of reality, either a problem or an event, can result from studying isolated facts or elements separately. On the contrary, it is through one's synthesis of all facts or elements, i.e., this 'whole-part-whole' perspective, that one can expect to understand and hence resolve complex problems in reality.

2.22. Historical Perspective

The second essential characteristic of Mao's method is its 'historical perspective' which follows a 'past-present-future' approach. Contrary to the

widespread claim that he opposes anything ancient or historical, Mao himself is very history-minded, for he realizes the importance of history. His writings show him to be well-versed in Chinese history. For example, to explain the importance of the peasants, Mao summarizes the peasant uprisings which have occurred in Chinese history:

> The ruthless economic exploitation and political oppression of the Chinese peasants forced them into numerous uprisings against landlord rule. There were hundreds of uprisings, great and small, all of them peasant revolts or peasant revolutionary wars – from the uprisings of Chen Sheng, Wu Kuang, Hsiang Yu and Liu Pang in the Chin Dynasty, those of Hsinshih, Pinglin, the Red Eyebrows, the Bronze Horses and the Yellow Turbans in the Han Dynasty, those of Li Mi and Tou Chien-teh in the Sui Dynasty, those of Wang Hsien-chih and Huang Chao in the Tang Dynasty, those of Sung Chiang and Fang La in the Sung Dynasty, that of Chu Yüan-chang in the Yüan Dynasty, and that of Li Tze-cheng in the Ming Dynasty, down to the uprising known as the War of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in the Ching Dynasty. The scale of peasant uprising and peasant wars in Chinese history has no parallel anywhere else.[24]

Again, when discussing war, Mao illustrates a point by enumerating the battles waged throughout China's history:

> When we look at the record of defeats suffered by big and powerful armies and of victories won by small and weak armies, there are many such instances in Chinese and foreign history. Examples in China are the battle of Chengpu between the states of Tsin and Chu, the Battle of Chengkao between the states of Chu and Han, the Battle in which Han Hsin defeated the Chao armies, the Battle of Kunyang between the states of Hsin and Han, the Battle of Kuantu between Yüan Shao and Tsao Tsao, the Battle of Chihpi between the states of Wu and Wei, the Battle of Yiling between the states of Wu and Shu, the Battle of Feishui between the states of Chin and Tsin, etc. . . .[25]

These are but two examples of Mao's knowledge of Chinese history. He also frequently quotes from the writings of Confucius, Mencius, Lao-tzu, Hsün-tze, Ssu-ma Chien, Chu Hsi and others.[26] Mao also makes references to the *Book of Odes*, the *Tso-chuan*, and seems particularly fond of *The Heroes of the Marshes*, and *The Pilgrimage of the West*.[27] In short, Mao clearly realizes the importance of history; and his knowledge of Chinese history is amply demonstrated by his writings.

Furthermore, not only does Mao know Chinese history himself, he also stresses its importance in his dealings with others as well as in his revolutionary activities. In discussing 'study', Mao writes,

> Another of our tasks is to study our historical heritage and use the Marxist method to sum it up critically. Our national history goes back several thousand years and has its own characteristics and innumerable treasures. But in these matters we are mere

schoolboys. Contemporary China has grown out of the China of the past; we are Marxist in our historical approach and must not lop off our history. We should sum up our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and take over this valuable legacy. This is important for guiding the great movement of today.[28]

For Mao, the importance of our history, our historical heritage, and an historical approach is beyond doubt. Since the present has grown out of the past, we should not cut ourselves off from history but rather we should know it. We should make a critical evaluation of our history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen so that we can learn from the past – both its successes and its failures. In this way, we can absorb any good values from our historical heritage and continue to enrich our historical treasure. Thus, in his 'Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art', Mao says that we should "take over the fine things in our literary and artistic heritage", and "use them as examples when we create works out of the literary and artistic raw materials in the life of the people of our own time and place."[29] He even states that "we must on no account reject the legacies of the ancients and the foreigners or refuse to learn from them, even though they are the works of the feudal or bourgeois classes."[30] In a sense, Mao considers history as a 'mirror' by which we can know our past as well as our present.

In fact, when analyzing the present, Mao always analyzes it from the perspective of historical development. For example, faced with a complex development of historical changes in China in the 20th century, Mao makes this evaluation:

Take the process of China's bourgeois democratic revolution, which began with the Revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages. In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on . . . Nevertheless this process has passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place – the failure of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the regime of the Northern warlords, and formation of the first national united front and the revolution of 1924–1927, the break-up of the united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counterrevolution, the wars among the new warlords, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the establishment of the second national united front and the War of Resistance against Japan.[31]

Similarly, at the end of the War of Resistance against Japan, Mao analyzes the

complex situation of the Kuomintang from an historical perspective, and predicts its possible attacks on the Communists – because, he explains, by looking at the past of the Kuomintang, we can tell its present; by looking at its past and present, we can tell its future.[32]

While emphasizing the importance of history, Mao does not advocate *uncritical* acceptance of whatever is ancient or traditional, that is, in terms of the dynastic system as a whole with its Confucian political ideology. On the contrary, Mao always insists that we must study history *critically*. In advocating a new culture for China, Mao says, "ancient Chinese culture should neither be totally rejected nor blindly copied, but should be accepted discriminatingly so as to help the progress of China's new culture."[33] Moreover, this kind of critical evaluation and acceptance of the past is also necessary in other kinds of works such as the literary and artistic as well as the linguistic. In literature and art, according to Mao, we must "take over all the fine things in our literary and artistic heritage, and critically assimilate whatever is beneficial".[34] In linguistics, we should "learn whatever is alive in the classical Chinese language", but "we are resolutely opposed to any use of obsolete expressions and allusions".[35] In short, only with such a critical attitude can we learn what is beneficial and alive in our historical heritage, and reject whatever is 'harmful' and 'dead'.

Because of his awareness of importance of history, Mao is very critical of those who ignore it. It is shameful, Mao says, that "many Party members are still in a fog about Chinese history, whether of the past hundred years or of ancient times."[36] Again, "They have no interest in studying either the China of today or the China of yesterday."[37] As a result, they make mistakes or formulate incorrect policies or plans concerning revolutionary movements. Thus it is necessary to study history – the China of today and the China of yesterday – to learn from historical experience, and thereby to guide the present and the future correctly. To achieve this, Mao suggests that the best qualified persons be assembled to study history – economic history, political history, military history, and cultural history.[38] Only then can we hope to understand the past and the present and be better equipped to shape the future.

2.23. Concrete Objectivity

The third essential characteristic of Mao's method is its 'concrete objectivity' which follows an 'objective-subjective-objective' approach. It is obvious that this 'objective-subjective-objective' approach is based on dialectical materialism, as understood by Mao. Being a Marxist, Mao of course accepts the basic

laws of dialectical materialism: that is, matter (or being) has primacy over spirit (or thought); the law of change or motion operates in reality, both in Nature and in society. Guided by these laws, Mao proposes that reality should be studied in concrete objectivity, which would involve three phases. In viewing reality as a whole, one must first start with objective reality, then move to subjective reflection, and finally return to objective reality for its completion. Throughout the entire process, 'objectivity' must be emphasized and 'subjectivism' avoided.

But what, after all, is 'objectivity'? To view reality objectively, one must examine the concrete situation or event, to arrive at a concrete understanding of it. In other words, one must collect specific facts or data on that situation or event, analyze them, and make a critical evaluation of them. Only then can one understand the situation or event as it really is and discover its concrete contradictions. To explain the importance of this kind of concrete analysis of conditions, Mao makes use of Lenin's words:

> The most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teaching; they never use their brains to analyze anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content.[39]

Again, in discussing war, Mao says, "What is important or decisive should be determined not by general or abstract conditions, but according to the concrete circumstances."[40] For without objectivity, correct understanding of the situation or event (reality) is impossible and mistakes and errors are inevitable.

The second movement of concrete objectivity is subjective reflection. While starting with objective reality, Mao's method does not ignore 'subjective reflection' which is necessary in any process of understanding reality. As explained above, when data are collected, they must be analyzed or critically evaluated so that correct ideas and policies can be formed. For only those ideas and policies which are based on objective and concrete facts are correct. Viewed from this perspective, the objective and the subjective movements are not opposed to one another, but closely interrelated. Without the objective movement, the subjective movement is devoid of content; without the subjective movement, the objective movement remains a 'dead fact'. Together they form a dynamic and concrete objectivity.

By now, the charge that Mao is a 'subjectivist' has been disproved. For what Mao vehemently objects to is 'subjectivism' (though in his writings, instead of 'subjectivism', he uses the term 'the subjective approach'), as he explains:

When we say we are opposed to a subjective approach to problems, we mean that we must oppose ideas which are not based upon or do not correspond to objective facts, because such ideas are fanciful and fallacious and will lead to failure if acted on.[41]

Thus 'fanciful and fallacious ideas' without any concrete or factual basis are the result of subjectivism. Elsewhere Mao points out that such ideas are mere illusions[42] and that their authors are mere "chatterers" who "want to get things on the cheap, to have gain without pain". As a matter of fact, Mao is very critical of those subjective chatterers whom he describes as follows in his 'Reform Our Study':

We are lacking in a climate of investigation and study of objective reality. To behave like 'a blindfolded man catching sparrows', or, 'a blind man groping for fish', to be crude and careless, to indulge in verbiage, to rest content with a smattering of knowledge – such is the extremely bad style of work . . . It is necessary to study conditions conscientiously and to proceed from objective reality and not from subjective wishes.[44]

Anyone who acts like "a blindfolded man catching sparrows" or "a blind man groping for fish" is bound to misunderstand reality and to make grave mistakes and errors in his revolutionary struggles.

With the objective and subjective movements, the process of concrete objectivity is not yet complete. After subjective reflection, one must return to objective reality to 'verify' one's findings and conclusions. They may be correct if they correspond to objective reality, or incorrect if they do not. In the latter case, errors should be corrected according to concrete conditions. Thus it is through these three 'objective-subjective-objective' movements that the process of Mao's objectivity is obtained which gives an understanding of concrete reality. But this is all intimately linked with Mao's theory of knowledge, which comprises the fourth essential characteristic of Mao's method.

2.24. The Praxiological Perspective

The last essential characteristic of Mao's method is its 'praxiological perspective' which follows a 'practice-theory-practice' or 'social practice-theory-social practice' approach, mainly elaborated upon in his theory of knowledge. But since Mao's theory of knowledge is not our main concern here, we shall mention only its basic ideas as they relate to his method. According to Mao, the entire process of cognition or human knowledge consists of three phases: social practice, theory, and social practice. First, human knowledge begins with social practice which is the primary and fundamental source of human knowledge, because it is only from social practice that man initiates the process of human knowing. But what is 'social practice'? Mao's concept of social practice seems to have a wide scope, because it is "not confined to

activity in production, but takes many other forms – class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits; in short, as a social being, man participates in all spheres of the practical life of society".[45] In other words, any activities as long as they are related to the practical life of society – concerning material production, social transformation, or scientific work – are all considered as 'social practice'. And it is from this kind of activity that man begins to acquire knowledge.

However, along with the beginning of social practice comes the second phase of human knowledge. According to Mao, there are two distinct but inseparable movements: perceptual and rational. The former involves the interactions between reality and the five sense-organs, which Mao describes thus:

> ... man at first sees only the phenomenal side, the separate aspects, the external relations of things. For instance, some people from outside come to Yenan on a tour of observation. In the first day or two, they see its topography, streets and houses; they meet many people, attend banquets, evening parties and mass meetings, hear talk of various kinds and read various documents, all these being the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things. This is called the perceptual stage of congnition, namely, the stage of sense perceptions and impressions. That is, these particular things in Yenan act on the sense organs of the members of the observation group, evoke sense perceptions and give rise in their brains to many impressions together with a rough sketch of the external relations among these impressions: this is the first state of cognition. At this stage, man cannot as yet form concepts, which are deeper, or draw logical conclusions.[46]

Thus perception reveals only "the phenomenal side, the separate aspects, and the external relations of things". However as social practice continues, the second involvement, of rational knowledge, succeeds which involves the formation of concepts and then judgements and inference. When perception continues to repeat itself sufficiently, then a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of cognition, and concepts are formed. Proceeding further through judgements and inferences, one is able to derive rational knowledge, which can take the form of logical conclusions, plans, policies, programs, etc. – in short, 'theories'. Although perception and rationality are distinctive movements, they are not opposed to each other, because they are "united on the basis of practice".[47]

But the entire process of human knowledge is not yet complete. Once a theory (in the form of a conclusion or plan) is formed, it must be tested for correctness. The theory must be verified in 'social practice'. The theory is correct only if it can correspond to objective reality. That is, it must realize the aims desired; otherwise, the theory is incorrect, because it fails to accomplish its desired purposes. Thus, social practice becomes the criterion for testing the validity of human knowledge, and therefore plays the most

important role in the theory of human knowledge. To explain the importance of social practice as the criterion to verify a theory, Mao says,

> Man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice.[48]

Again, elsewhere, Mao emphasizes the same point,

> The problems of whether they correspond to objective reality is not, and cannot be, completely solved in the movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, mentioned above. The only way to solve this problem completely is to redirect rational knowledge to social practice, apply theory to practice and see whether it can achieve the objective one has in mind.[49]

Only through a return to social practice is the cycle of human knowledge complete, but the first cycle (social practice-theory-social practice) is but one of the endless cycles in the whole process of human knowing. Then the second cycle will start anew with its own new 'social practice-theory-social practice'; and the knowledge of this cycle will be at a higher level in the sense that it will be more enlarged and enriched than that of the preceding one. This whole process of human knowledge is summarized by Mao himself at the end of his theory of knowledge:

> Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge.[50]

With this, we end the first stage in our presentation of Mao's method. While these four essential characteristics or perspectives do not constitute a definition of Mao's method, they can provide a general understanding of it. If one adopts the 'whole-part-whole' approach, and a 'past-present-future' perspective, if he tries to be 'objective-subjective-objective', and moves through a process of 'social practice-theory-social practice', his method is inevitably very flexible and dynamic. A careful analysis of Mao's writings reveals the practical application of his own method. For the fact that Mao's method is reconstructed from his own writings shows that his theory and practice – as far as his method is concerned – constitute a unity, namely, 'praxis'.

Before presenting Mao's point of departure, a further word on the translation of *'huo-hsüeh huo-yung'* is of interest. In the light of the above explanation, it may be translated as *"synthetic praxis"*, with 'synthetic' referring to 'whole-part-whole' and 'past-present-future', while 'praxis' refers to 'objective-subjective-objective' and 'practice-theory-practice'.

2.3. MAO'S POINT OF DEPARTURE

Having presented an overall view of Mao's methodology, we shall now examine the point of departure of his theory of dialectic. Mao's point of departure is 'materialist dialectics', based on his concept of 'social practice'. To expound upon all of this, we shall follow a negative-to-positive procedure. Negatively, we shall discuss what Mao's point of departure is not; and then, positively, state what it is.

2.31. Negatively

By drawing a contrast between the two world views – metaphysical and materialist – Mao first explains what his point of departure is not:

> In China another name for metaphysic is ***hsüan-hsüeh***. For a long period in history, whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant position in human thought . . . The metaphysical or vulgar-evolutionist world-outlook sees things as isolated, static, and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as actually isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that the different kinds of things in the universe and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being . . . In China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying, 'Heaven changes not, likewise the *Tao* changes not'.[51]

Mao thus rejects the metaphysical approach (as his point of departure) for two reasons. First, the metaphysical approach, according to Mao, is idealistic in that it begins with the premise that things are isolated and one-sided. The exponents of the metaphysical approach believe that things are actually isolated from each other, and that their causes are reduced to an oversimplified theory of external motion or change. Secondly, this kind of metaphysical approach is static, because it considers the universe or reality to be changeless or eternally the same; or in the Chinese expression, "Heaven changes not, likewise the *Tao* changes not". But, for Mao, nothing could be further from the truth. Consequently, the metaphysical approach cannot serve as a valid

starting point for his theory of dialectic. Similarly, in his 'Talks on Literature and Art', Mao makes this point clear:

> In discussing a problem, we should start from reality, and not from definitions. We would be following a wrong method if we first looked up definitions of literature and art in textbooks and then used them to determine the guiding principles for the present-day literary and artistic movement and to judge the different opinions and controversies that arise today. We are Marxists, and Marxism teaches that in our approach to a problem we should derive our guiding principles, policies and measures from an analysis of these facts.[52]

For Mao, any point of departure that is based on 'definitions' or 'abstractions' is an erroneous starting point which will only lead to further errors, because it is based merely on 'idealistic' assertions without any objective, concrete, solid foundation.

2.32. Positively

Having rejected the metaphysical approach, Mao adopts as his point of departure 'materialist dialectics', which he describes thus:

> As opposed to the metaphysical world-view, the world-view of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations with other things are secondary causes.[53]

This concise statement reveals that Mao's point of departure is materialist dialectics; and its precise nature involves three distinct characteristics: 'sociality', 'development' and 'social practice'. The first refers to the fact that all things or events in the universe are not isolated but inter-related. In order to understand them, one must begin with their inter-relations or 'socialities'. Failing to treat them in this context of sociality, one would fall into the pitfall of metaphysical isolationism.

The second characteristic is 'development', which reveals a dynamic perspective. Since each thing itself is a self-movement, and also interacts with other self-movements, one must, when studying them, take into consideration their dynamic interactions. The element of 'development' is crucial; only then can one hope to have a proper and correct grasp of reality that is thoroughly dynamic.

The third characteristic is 'social practice'. As explained above, Mao's concept of social practice has a wide scope and refers to all of man's activities, as long as they are related to the practical life of man in society. Furthermore, the most important activities are those which are concerned with material production, and to a lesser degree, social transformation and scientific work. It is upon such concrete and practical activities that Mao is to build his theory of dialectic. This is also entirely consistent with Mao's Marxist belief that man's social being determines his thinking or consciousness, not vice versa.

CHAPTER 3

MAO'S THEORY OF DIALECTIC

In the light of Mao's methodology and point of departure, we shall now reconstruct (through our own method of reflective synthesis) and present Mao's theory of dialectic *per se*. Since it is a philosophical inquiry, we shall try to make it as objective as possible by basing it almost exclusively on Mao's own texts,[1] while reserving our own critical evaluation for later. Mao's theory of dialectic comprises three main 'moments': 'universality', 'particularity' and 'dialectic'. But before presenting these three moments, we must discuss Mao's key concept, 'contradiction' as a philosophical term, which is both the foundation and center of his entire theory of dialectic. Thus, our discussion is divided into four sections: (1) the concept of contradiction, (2) the universality of contradiction, (3) the particularity of contradiction, and (4) the dialectic of contradiction.

3.1. THE CONCEPT OF CONTRADICTION

'Contradiction' is not only the key term in Mao's theory of dialectic but also the very kernel of his entire philosophy, which is in turn the foundation of his entire system of thought as well as of his political and revolutionary activities. Yet Mao provides no systematic treatment of 'contradiction' as a term; nor does he ever define it in philosophical terms. He simply uses it extensively and frequently, and above all, in many different contexts, which make its precise meaning even more difficult to grasp. We shall first examine how Mao uses the term, 'contradiction' in various contexts, and then try to synthesize his philosophical meaning of it.

3.11. Contexts

Study of various writings of Mao establishes that he uses the term 'contradiction' mainly in three different but related contexts: the 'natural context', the 'social context' and the 'personal or cognitive context'. In general, the former two contexts concern objective reality whereas the last one concerns subjective reality. But, concretely, the natural context is concerned with nature, especially in terms of 'existences' or 'things' and 'natural phenomena' or 'process'. In this context, 'contradiction' is used to denote 'things'. As Mao

says, "contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things",[2] and "contradictions exist everywhere, but they differ in accordance with the different nature of different things".[3] Thus each objectively existing thing is for Mao a contradiction, because it is the contradiction within that particular thing that determines its essence or nature, and distinguishes it from others.[4] Similarly, Mao uses the term, 'contradiction' to refer to natural (and scientific) phenomena such as "heat, light, electricity, or chemical activity",[5] as well as to "growth in plants and animals".[6]

However, in order to understand a thing or natural phenomenon, according to Mao, we have to consider it as a process or motion, since nature as a whole is not static but totally dynamic. Being dynamic, a thing or natural phenomenon has a twofold relationship: internal and external. Any thing or natural phenomenon has its own internal structure, and the various parts of this structure are dynamically related. Together they form a dynamic unity which determines the essence or nature of a particular thing or natural phenomenon, and differentiates it from others. As Mao expresses it:

> Unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another . . . [7]

Contradiction is thus used by Mao to specify the internal structure of a thing or natural phenomenon. Moreover, this internal contradiction is the primary and fundamental cause of the movement or development of a thing or natural phenomenon.[8]

Secondly, besides its internal structure, a thing or natural phenomenon has its external relationships. For a thing or natural phenomenon cannot exist in isolation; it must exist in relation to other things or natural phenomena. Thus contradiction is also used by Mao to refer to the external relation of a thing or natural phenomenon to other things or natural phenomena. He says, "each thing in its movement is interrelated with and (inter)acts on the things around it".[9] In other words, for Mao, things or natural phenomena depend upon, and interact with one another. Their interaction also forms a dynamic relationship which, though responsible for their movements or developments, is only the secondary cause.

In this natural context, according to Mao, both the internal dynamic relationship of a thing or natural phenomenon (within its internal structure) and the external dynamic relationship (among various things or natural phenomena) are considered as 'contradictions'. And that is why Mao can state that

"contradiction is motion; contradiction is a thing", and "contradiction is a process".[10] For Mao, all objectively existing things or natural phenomena are motions or processes, and therefore 'contradictions'. "There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction, nothing would exist."[11]

The second context in which Mao uses contradiction is the social context, which is perhaps the most important among the three specified above. For although Mao uses contradiction in all three contexts, his primary concern is to discover contradictions in society and then to resolve them. Thus, it is understandable that Mao devotes so much attention to examining the many contradictions in society. Mao views any social phenomenon or event essentially as a relationship or a process of relationships, and as such, also a contradiction; but the term, 'contradiction', is used in this context with four slightly different nuances. First, 'contradiction' is used to refer to a dynamic relationship between different groups or classes that are opposed to, or antagonistic to, one another. As Mao explains it:

> There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing. For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the conditions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between all oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the bourgeoisie, on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups, and so on.[12]

Thus the social relationships between different antagonistic classes such as between "all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism" or between "the proletariat and the bourgeoisie", are all considered by Mao as 'social contradictions'. Both China, a semi-feudal and a semi-colonial society, and capitalist societies are, according to Mao, full of such contradictions.

'Contradiction' is also used to refer to a dynamic relationship between different groups or classes that are not opposed to one another, i.e., that are "non-antagonistic". This kind of contradiction exists mainly among the people in a socialist society; for example, Mao states, "the cooperatives are now in the process of gradual consolidation. Certain contradictions remain to be resolved, such as those between the state and the cooperatives and those among and within the cooperatives themselves."[13] Since these contradictions are among the people, they are non-antagonistic in nature. Similarly, the dynamic relationships between the working class and the peasant class in a

socialist society belong to this kind of non-antagonistic contradiction, and as such should be solved differently.[14]

Another nuance in which Mao uses 'contradiction' is a 'problem'. "What is a problem?" Mao asks and replies, "A problem is the contradiction in a thing. Where there is an unsolved contradiction, there one has a problem. Since there is a problem you have to be for one side and against the other, and you have to pose the problem."[15] Thus a problem for Mao becomes a contradiction, because a problem is a relation or situation which is not properly harmonized. Consequently, a problem or contradiction needs to be resolved, though the process of resolving problems or contradictions is a never-ending one. For as soon as old problems or contradictions are resolved, new ones arise. As Mao says, "We must continue to resolve all such contradictions in the light of our specific conditions. Of course, new problems will emerge as these contradictions are resolved. And further efforts will be required to resolve the contradictions."[16]

Finally, Mao uses 'contradiction' to refer to a relation or situation where difficulty exists. As a matter of fact, in some places, he seems to identify contradiction with difficulty. For example:

> Our large population is a good thing, but of course it also involves certain difficulties. Construction is going ahead vigorously on all fronts and very successfully too, but in the present transitional period of tremendous social change there are still many difficult problems. Progress and at the same time difficulties – this is a contradiction.[17]

Again, when discussing the economy, Mao says, "We want to carry on large-scale construction, but our country is still very poor – herein lies a contradiction."[18] In other words, any difficulty involves contradiction. Such contradiction is very common and exists in any ordinary situation in society. For instance, "Both chauvinism and local nationalism are harmful to unity of the nationalities; they represent a specific contradiction among the people."[19] In analyzing China's situation in the 1930's, Mao says that contradictions exist everywhere. For example: "Because the schools have no money, many students fear that their education may be interrupted; because production is backward, many graduates have no hope of employment."[20]

In short, all of this shows that contradiction is used by Mao to refer essentially to a social phenomenon or event, which is nothing but a dynamic relationship or a process of dynamic relationships.[21] It may be antagonistic or non-antagonistic; or it may take the form of a problem or difficulty. But as long as there is a dynamic relationship, there is a contradiction.

The third context in which Mao uses contradiction is the 'personal or

cognitive context', which belong to subjective reality in the sense that it (i.e., the contradiction) takes place in thought or knowledge. According to Mao, knowledge is essentially the reflection of objective reality, i.e., of nature and society. Since objective reality is full of contradictions so, too, is knowledge. As Mao describes it:

> The development of an objective process is full of contradictions and struggles, and so is the development of the movement of human knowledge. All the dialectical movements of the objective world can sooner or later be reflected in human knowledge. In social practice, the process of coming into being, developing and passing away is infinite, and so is the process of coming into being, developing and passing away in human knowledge. As man's practice, which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper. The movement of change in the world of objective reality is never-ending and so is man's cognition of truth through practice.[22]

Thus knowledge, if it is a true reflection of objective reality, is full of contradictions.

Furthermore, the process of acquiring knowledge also involves contradiction. For man acquires knowledge in two ways, either by increasing the knowledge he already has, or by correcting his erroneous knowledge. But in both cases, contradictions exist. Mao describes the former thus:

> When we engage in study, the same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge. At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance of or scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism. But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application.[23]

The latter is described by Mao thus:

> It does happen that the original ideas, theories, plans, programmes fail to correspond with reality either in whole or in part and are wholly or partially incorrect. In many instances, failures have to be repeated many times before errors in knowledge can be corrected . . .[24]

In both cases, Mao sees a dynamic relationship which is a process of the development of knowledge. The former is a dynamic relationship between ignorance and knowledge, or better, between 'less-known' and 'more-known', while the latter is a dynamic relationship between erroneous knowledge and correct knowledge. The dynamic relationship in either case is considered by Mao as a contradiction. In other words, in the personal or cognitive context, contradiction is nothing but the transformation of knowledge either

in quantity (from ignorance to knowledge or from less-known to more-known) or in quality (from erroneous knowledge to correct knowledge).

Finally, the very nature of human knowing also involves 'contradiction'. For the movement of human knowing follows a twofold procedure: from the particular to the general and from the general to the particular. That is, it begins with the knowledge of particular things and progresses toward the knowledge of the particular essences of things. Once this is achieved, it proceeds to the knowledge of things in general, that is, knowledge of the common essences of things through generalization or abstraction. On the other hand, such knowledge of the common essences of things in turn enriches one's knowledge of the particularities of those things. In other words, the general moves back to the particular. In Mao's words, there are, "two processes of cognition: one from the particular to the general, and the other, from the general to the particular. Thus, cognition always moves in cycles, and (so long as scientific method is strictly adhered to) each cycle advances human knowledge a step higher and so makes it more and more profound."[25] But in this very nature of the human desire to know more and more, lies a contradiction. Mao explains:

> We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is – at least practically, for us – an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.[26]

Thus this dynamic relationship between the infinite capacity for human knowing and its actual realization in man is considered by Mao as a contradiction and as such should be resolved by continuous growth in knowledge both quantitatively and qualitatively. What has been said perhaps explains how Mao can rightly assert that 'thought is contradiction' or 'contradiction is thought'.

3.12. The Philosophical Meaning of Contradiction

From the various usages of contradiction in these three contexts, it is clear that the meaning that Mao attributes to contradiction is definite and remains consistent, though with slightly different nuances in some cases. Now we will try to synthesize its philosophical meaning by a 'negative-to-positive' approach.

3.121. Negative. 'Contradiction' is the English translation of the Chinese term,

mao-tun 矛盾. However, as explained above, Mao provides no systematic treatment of contradiction as a term; nor does he ever give it a clear-cut philosophical definition. In fact, only once in his entire writings does Mao explain these two Chinese characters, 矛 (*mao*, spear) and 盾 (*tun*, shield). Even then he treats them separately by way of illustrating two types of weapons used in war: the former for attack and the latter for defense:

> In ancient warfare, the spear and the shield were used, the spear to attack and destroy the enemy, and the shield to defend and preserve oneself. To the present day, all weapons are still an extension of the spear and the shield. The bomber, the machine-gun, the long-range gun and poison gas are developments of the spear, while the air-raid shelter, the steel helmet, the concrete fortification and the gas mask are developments of the shield. The tank is a new weapon combining the functions of both spear and shield.[27]

Here Mao uses '*mao*' and '*tun*' not as one term but independently of each other; they symbolize two different types of weaponry both in ancient and in modern times. Apart from this one instance, he always uses *mao* and *tun* together as one term or phrase, which has quite a different and consistent content.

'Contradiction' as used by Mao does not have exactly the same meaning as the original Chinese term *mao-tun*. The original meaning of *mao-tun* is derived from a traditional Chinese story.[28] A man boasts that he can supply shields (*tun*) which nothing can pierce, while at the same time offering spears (*mao*) which can penetrate anything. "What happens," someone asks, "when your shield and your spear meet?" Thus, the original meaning of *mao-tun* is 'mutually opposed' or 'logically incompatible'. The literal meaning of *mao-tun* is thus very close to the meaning of the English word, 'contradiction'. Since 'contradiction' comes from the Latin preposition *contra*, meaning 'against' and the past participle of the verb *dicere* (to say), *dicta*, meaning 'what is said', it refers to 'that which is against what is said', thereby implying 'mutually opposed' or 'logically incompatible'.

3.122. Positive. When Mao uses contradiction, however, he has a much wider and more dynamic meaning than simply 'mutually opposed' or 'logically incompatible'. To him, the primary and essential meaning of contradiction is 'dynamic relationship of interaction', whether in nature, society, or thought. As explained, any natural phenomenon, social event or thought is a motion or a process with internal and external relationships, which, as long as they form a dynamic unity, are considered by Mao as 'contradictions'. In other words, the primary and essential meaning of contradiction is 'a process of a

dynamic relationship of interaction' which includes both unity and diversity, both the whole and the part, both identity and struggle. Mao explains this idea through a Chinese proverb, "hsiang-fan hsiang-ch'eng" (相反相成):

> We Chinese often say, 'things that oppose each other also complement each other'. That is, things opposed to each other have identity. This saying is dialectical and contrary to metaphysics. 'Oppose each other' refers to the mutual exclusion or the struggle of two contradictory aspects. 'Complement each other' means that in given conditions the two contradictory aspects unite and achieve identity.[29]

From all this, the philosophical meaning of contradiction can be synthesized as 'dynamic relationship of interaction' or 'dynamic relationship as such' or simply '*relationality*'. Only from this philosophical connotation, can we understand many of Mao's difficult and seemingly meaningless statements such as:

> There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing could exist.[30]

> Life is therefore a contradiction . . . As soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end.[31]

> To deny contradiction is to deny everything.[32]

> Contradiction is motion; contradiction is thing (natural phenomenon or social event), contradiction is process, and contradiction is thought.[33]

> Difference itself is contradiction.[34]

> A problem is the contradiction in a thing.[35]

> Progress and at the same time difficulties – this is a contradiction.[36]

> We want to carry on large-scale construction, but our country is still very poor – herein lies a contradiction.[37]

All of these and other similar statements by Mao become significant when contradiction is viewed as 'a process of a dynamic relationship of interaction' or 'dynamic relationship as such' or 'relationality'. This also explains why Mao always considers reality as dynamic for it is full of such dynamic contradictions. In this sense, it is true that 'Reality is contradiction' or 'contradiction is Reality'.

Together with its primary and essential meaning as 'dynamic relationship of interaction', contradiction has, according to Mao, some nuances. One is that contradiction is 'a dynamic relationship of interaction' *in terms of difference*, for Mao thinks that "Difference itself is contradiction."[38] While

this variation retains the primary and essential meaning, a slightly greater emphasis is given to 'difference'. For example, when used in the personal or cognitive context, contradiction may mean both transformation from ignorance to knowledge, or better from less-known to more-known, and transition from incorrect knowledge to correct knowledge. In such a transition, what is emphasized is the 'difference', though the difference is always viewed in its dynamic relationship of interaction. When Mao discusses a concrete problem in the Soviet Union, he writes, "Each and every difference already contains contradiction, and the difference itself is contradiction ... There is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction."[39]

Another slight variation is that contradiction is used as 'a dynamic relationship of interaction' *in terms of a problem and a difficulty*. As explained above, Mao considers both problem and difficulty as contradiction. "A problem is the contradiction in a thing. Where there is an unsolved contradiction, there is a problem."[40] "Progress and at the same time difficulties – this is a contradiction."[41] For a problem or a difficulty presents a situation or event where different sides or groups are not in harmony, and thus are interacting for or against, with or among, one another. Such a dynamic relationship of interaction for Mao is nothing but a contradiction.

Still another slight variation is that contradiction is 'a dynamic relationship of interaction' *in terms of antagonism*. In this kind of contradiction, there is still a dynamic relationship of interaction; but that very dynamic relationship of interaction contains its own destruction. Irreconcilable conflicts among its parts will eventually destroy its dynamic unity. In other words, since this kind of contradiction contains within itself irreconcilable conflicts, it will develop into open antagonism, and eventually into revolution. When that happens, its dynamic relationship of unity will dissolve and a new contradiction will emerge. Such antagonistic contradictions exist, according to Mao, primarily in society, though also in nature. For the latter, Mao cites the example of a bomb and other similar natural and technical phenomena which will explode and produce new things; while for the former, he cites the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes, and the Opium War and Sino-Japanese War in Chinese history.[42]

3.2. THE UNIVERSALITY OF CONTRADICTION

Since Mao's point of departure is 'materialist dialectics' rooted in a reality in which all things are dynamically interrelated and interacting, it follows

naturally that his theory of dialectic should begin with the affirmation of the universality of contradiction. "There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing could exist."[43] Again, "To deny contradiction is to deny everything."[44] In such direct statements, Mao clearly affirms the universality or absoluteness of contradiction in Reality which consists of nature, society, and thought. But what does this mean concretely? To this question, Mao answers that "The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. . . . Contradiction exists (1) in the process of all things, and . . . (2) in the process of development of each thing . . . from beginning to end."[45]

3.21. The First Meaning

That contradictions exist in the process of all things seems obvious to Mao. We have seen how Mao shows the existence of contradictions in all natural phenomena or things, social events and thought. However, we shall mention them briefly here to complete Mao's explanation of this point. In the natural realm, both simple and complex motions – such as mechanical motions, chemical changes, or other natural and scientific phenomena – are 'contradictions', for they all form a dynamic, interrelated and interacting whole. For example, action and reaction are inseparable and thereby constitute a contradiction; or the positive and negative charges interact to produce electricity, which then is nothing but a 'contradiction'. In short, Mao affirms that nature is full of contradictions, when he explains in Engels' words:

> If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of higher forms of motions of matter, and especially of organic life and its development . . . Life consists precisely and primarily in this – that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end.[46]

In the realm of society, contradictions also exist everywhere. Since Mao is primarily concerned with social contradictions, it is understandable that in practically all of his writings he reveals countless contradictions in Chinese society and history. Among them, Mao, being a Marxist, points out three basic ones that are primarily responsible for social change or progress.

> Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new.[47]

Furthermore, when the old society ends and the new society begins, the process of the development of contradiction does not disappear. For the new society contains new contradictions which should be resolved in their turn. In a sense, the process of the development of social contradiction continues as long as the society exists.

Besides these three general types of contradiction, Mao also points out that social contradictions (i.e., particular contradictions) exist in different historical periods. For example in China, during the period of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937 to 1945, contradictions existed between the Chinese people and Japanese imperialism; during the period of the civil war of 1946 to 1949, contradictions existed between the Communist Party and Kuomintang; and during the present period of social reconstruction, contradictions exist among the people, that is, between different classes such as between workers and peasants.[48] Furthermore, contradictions also exist in particular situations such as those in the Communist Party. For, "Oppositions and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end."[49] Finally, in any ordinary situation where problems or difficulties exist, contradictions are found. For, as explained above, a problem or a difficulty in society constitutes a social contradiction which must be resolved. In sum, that contradictions exist in society is, according to Mao, beyond a doubt.

In the third realm, that of thought, countless contradictions are also manifested, because thought itself is nothing but a true reflection of objective reality, that is, nature and society which are both full of contradictions. Furthermore, man has an infinite capacity for knowledge while his actual knowledge is always 'a dynamic relationship of interaction in terms of difference' – which is a contradiction – between the infinite capacity of knowing and any concrete knowledge that is realized.[50] Examples in this realm would be our knowledge of our enemy during a war, or our knowledge of mathematics, physics or social sciences.

What has been said, though by no means comprehensive, suffices to show that contradictions – as dynamic relationships of interaction – exist in nature, society and thought. In other words, Mao affirms the universality of contradiction by the fact that contradictions exist in the processes of all things.

3.22. The Second Meaning

The second meaning of the universality of contradiction is that contradiction exists in the process of development of each phenomenon or thing. This is so because each thing is a motion or a process which is the result of the dynamic relationship of interaction among its constituents. As Mao describes it:

> In order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words – the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development.[51]

Thus it is this dynamic unity of a thing that determines its essence or nature. Consequently contradiction – as a dynamic relationship of the interaction of its constituents – exists throughout the process of the development of that thing; otherwise that thing would be dissolved without dynamic unity. Similarly, contradiction exists in the development of society as a whole from beginning to end. To illustrate this point, Mao makes use of Lenin's study on Marx's *Capital*:

> As Lenin points out, Marx in his *Capital* gave a model analysis of this movement of contradiction which runs through the process of things from beginning to end. This is the method that must be employed in studying the development of all things. Lenin, too, employed this method correctly and adhered to it in all his writings.
>
> In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (*both* growth *and* movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the Σ (summation) of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.[52]

Again, when discussing the mistakes of the Deborin school in the Soviet Union, the same point is emphasized by Mao:

> The Deborin school maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage . . . These views of the Deborin school are anti-Marxist. This school does not understand that each and every difference already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labour and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not yet become intense. Even under the social conditions existing

in the Soviet Union, there is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labour and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class struggle; the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to Communism. The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.[53]

Thus it is clear, according to Mao, that contradiction permeates the development of each thing (including society as a whole) from beginning to end. As long as such a thing develops and remains a dynamic unity, contradiction is found in the very process of its development.

However, the development of each thing can take two forms. The first is that of quantitative progress, in which each thing retains its essence or nature, while making progress in terms of quantitative change. The second form is that of qualitative progress. That is, each thing develops or becomes a new thing which supersedes the old. Mao describes this form of progress thus:

What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites. Whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old process ends and the new one begins. The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradiction.[54]

When the new thing emerges, it will begin a new process of development in which a new contradiction will emerge and continue to exist from the new thing's beginning to its end.

3.3. THE PARTICULARITY OF CONTRADICTION

The discussion of the universality of contradiction is, of course, very general, for it is applicable to all phenomena or things, natural and social, as well as intellectual. However, any contradiction in reality is always concrete and definite, that is, 'particular'. Consequently 'contradiction as such' is inadequate when dealing with any concrete contradiction. Thus, Mao maintains that one must know the particularity of a contradiction in order to understand it and only then be able to resolve it. We will discuss (1) the particularity of contradiction, and (2) the means for knowing it.

3.31. The Particularity

What, then, is the particularity of contradiction? It refers to the concrete and unique characteristics of a contradiction, or simply, the essence or nature of a contradiction. Each thing, according to Mao, "contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another."[55] In other words, the contradiction in each thing has its own particularity; it is by this particularity that one thing is differentiated from others. As Mao describes it:

> Unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another.[56]

However, since in reality a contradiction is always 'a process of a dynamic relationship of interaction', it can be a simple or a complex process, that is, a simple process of a single contradiction, or a complex process of many contradictions. What are the respective particularities of each? We shall first discuss those of the complex process.

A complex process involves, of course, multi-dimensional relationships of many contradictions, all interrelated and interacting. Among them, however, one contradiction is necessarily the principal one while the others are secondary and subordinate. This phenomenon is described by Mao:

> Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved.[59]

Thus, the one that plays "the leading and decisive role" is the principal contradiction. It determines the essence or nature of the entire process. Moreover, it also determines or influences the existence and development of the secondary and subordinate contradictions. To illustrate the importance of the principal contradiction, Mao uses a case from China's history:

> In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture.
>
> When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned

becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Yi Ho Tuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War.[58]

Mao elsewhere points out that such a relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions exists also in capitalist society:

In capitalist society the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. The other contradictions, such as those between the remnant feudal class and the bourgeoisie, between the peasant petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and the peasant petty bourgeoisie, between the non-monopoly capitalists and the monopoly capitalists, between bourgeois democracy and bourgeois facism, among the capitalist countries and between imperialism and the colonies, are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction.[59]

From this perspective, to know the particularity of a complex process is to discover the principal contradiction, to know the relationship between the principal and the non-principal contradictions, and to resolve them accordingly.

On the other hand, a contradiction, either principal or secondary, can be a simple process. But no matter how simple it may be, it is still 'a dynamic relationship of interaction' of its various constituents, that is, its various contradictory aspects. Although these contradictory aspects form a dynamic unity, one of them must be the principal aspect and the others are secondary and subordinate aspects. This point is explained by Mao thus:

In any given contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the contradictory aspects be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction, the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position.[60]

Mao's point is clear. Like the principal contradiction in the complex process, the principal aspect is the one that "has gained the dominant position", playing the leading role in the simple process. As a result, it determines the essence or nature of that contradiction; and at the same time, it influences

the existence and development of the non-principal aspects. Since Mao considers this point important, he pays special attention to it:

> What is especially important and necessary . . . is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, namely to observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms. Only when we have done so can we distinguish between things. Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another. It is the internal cause, or, as it may be called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world.[61]

Thus, each contradiction is qualitatively different from others; and the qualitative differences of things depend on their respective principal aspects. From this perspective, therefore, to know the particularity of a simple process is to find the principal aspect and to know the relationship between the principal and the non-principal aspects of that contradiction. Only by distinguishing them concretely and correctly can one hope to understand it and thereby resolve it.

Furthermore, a simple or complex process may be long, and may consist of various stages of development. In that case, it is important to discover the principal and the non-principal aspects or contradictions at each stage. In other words, in studying the particularity of contradiction, one must examine its development at each and every stage. The reason, according to Mao, is that,

> Although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remains unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process. In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined or influenced by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge; hence the process is marked by stages.[62]

Thus it is clear that such a dynamic but complex process cannot be understood unless one grasps correctly the relations between the principal and non-principal contradictions not only at each stage but also during the entire development of all stages as a whole. Mao gives a concrete historical case:

> Take the process of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, which began with the revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages. In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted

thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on. None of these was spossible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership. Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, i.e., in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the process (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), nonetheless this process has passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place – the failure of the Northern warlords, the formation of the first national united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counter-revolution, the wars among the new warlords, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the establishment of the second national united front and the War of Resistance against Japan. These stages are marked by particular features such as the intensification of certain contradictions (e.g., the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the Japanese invasion of the four Northeastern provinces), the partial or temporary resolution of other contradictions (e.g., the destruction of the Northern Warlords and our confiscation of the land of landlords), and the emergence of yet other contradictions (e.g., the conflicts among the new warlords, and the landlords' recapture of the land after the loss of our revolutionary base areas in the South). [63]

This rather long but concrete list of historical events shows clearly how complex and dialectical a procession of contradictions can become. For it can involve several different stages, which in turn may consist of further sub-stages of many interacting contradictions. During these various stages, certain contradictions may be intensified; others may be temporarily or partially resolved; and still other, new contradictions may emerge. And that is perhaps why in the concrete it is always hard to know and analyze a complex situation and more so to resolve it.

3.32. 'How to Know the Particularity'

The above account clearly shows the importance of the particularity of any contradiction in that it determines the essence or nature of that contradiction. Thus to resolve any contradiction, it is necessary to know its particularity. But how can one know it? To answer this question, Mao suggests his own method: 'synthetic praxis', which, as explained above, comprises four three-fold movements: whole-part-whole, past-present-future, objective-subjective-objective, and social practice-theory-social practice. By applying some or all movements, one should be able to discover the particularity of any contradiction, be it a simple process of one contradiction or a complex process of many contradictions.

In addition, however, Mao also provides three common but practical suggestions. The first is to study a contradiction concretely, as he says:

In studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction – the contradiction in each

form of motion and matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage – in studying the particularity of all these contradictions, we . . . must analyze it concretely. Without concrete analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity of any contradiction.[64]

By "concrete analysis", Mao means studying that contradiction from its existential conditions, in its actual development. In other words, one should approach any contradiction, especially social events, personally and gather concrete facts. By analyzing these existential data, one should be able to determine its essence and its secondary characteristics, that is, 'its particularity'.

The second practical approach is an all-sided perspective in studying the particularity of any contradiction. Since any contradiction, either a simple or complex process, contains various interrelated and interacting constituents, one must study it not from one angle alone but from all angles, that is, one must study not one or more of its constituents but all of them. To explain this point, Mao quotes Lenin's words: " . . . in order really to know an object we must embrace it, study all its sides, all connections and 'mediations'. We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity."[65]

While admitting that no one can achieve complete all-sidedness, Mao maintains that the more one tries to look at a contradiction from all angles, the better chance he has to gain a better understanding of the particularity of that contradiction. Otherwise, one's view is bound to be one-sided and superficial, and so such a method is bound to be 'subjectivist'.[66]

The third practical approach suggested by Mao is that in studying the particularity, one must follow a twofold movement: one, from the particular to the general and the other, from the general to the particular. But why? Mao explains:

Since the particular is united with the universal and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection, to discover both the particularity and the universality and also interconnection within the object itself and to discover the interconnection of this object with the many objects outside it.[67]

Since the 'particularity' and the 'universality' are closely interrelated, they cannot, and should not, be studied separately. Consequently, the process of studying the particularity, according to Mao, should begin with the particularity, then proceed to the universality, and return to the particularity. This twofold movement is described by Mao:

As regards the sequence in the movement of man's knowledge, there is always a gradual growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the knowledge of things in general. Only after a man knows the particular essence of many different things can he proceed to the generalization and know the common essence of things. When a man attains the knowledge of this common essence, he uses it as a guide and proceeds to study various concrete things, which have not yet been studied, or studied thoroughly, and to discover the particular essence of each.[68]

Only through this twofold movement can one achieve the correct understanding of the particularity of any contradiction. On the other hand, any one who does not follow this twofold movement is very liable to make mistakes. And this is Mao's criticism of dogmatists:

Where our dogmatists err on this question is that, on the one hand, they do not understand that we have to study the particularity of contradiction to know the particular essence of individual things before we can adequately know the universality of contradiction and the common essence of things, and, on the other hand, they do not understand that after knowing the common essence of things, we must go further and study the concrete things that have not yet been thoroughly studied or have only just emerged ... Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two processes in cognition – from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular.[69]

With these three practical approaches (together with Mao's method of synthetic praxis), one should be able to discover the particularity of any contradiction, that is, to know the principal contradiction of a complex process of contradictions, the principal aspect of a simple contradiction, and the principal aspect or contradiction of each stage of either a simple or a complex process of contradictions.

3.4. THE DIALECTIC OF CONTRADICTION

After having explained the universality and the particularity of contradiction, Mao proceeds to discuss the 'dialectic of contradiction', which is the dynamic essence of the universal law of contradiction. Comprising some of the general principles guiding the development of contradiction, it deals with the problem of the unity of opposites, or the relationship between the unity of opposites and the struggle of opposites. The problem is obvious. How can there be the unity and the struggle of opposites in the very same contradiction? If it is a unity, how can it contain within itself contradictory aspects? Or if there are contradictory aspects, how can it still be a unity? In solving this problem, Mao uses the dialectic of contradiction, which explains the unity on the one hand, and the struggle on the other. Together they form a dynamic unity of

opposites. As to our presentation, we shall discuss (1) relativity of the unity of opposites, (2) absoluteness of the struggle of opposites, and (3) their transformationality.

3.41. Relativity of the Unity of Opposites

In order to understand the relativity of the unity of opposites, let us first examine Mao's concept of unity:

> Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation. All these terms mean the same thing.[70]

Since they are all synonymous, the meaning of unity is the same as interdependence, interconnection, or interpenetration, which all involve interaction or interrelation while preserving a dynamic whole. Whenever and wherever there is such an interaction, there is unity or a dynamic whole. With this understanding Mao views a contradiction (a dynamic relationship of interaction) as a unity, though a unity of opposites, or, of contradictory aspects. For although they are opposed to one another, they are mutually related or interdependent. As Mao observes:

> . . . the fact is that no contradictory aspect can exist in isolation. Without its opposite aspect, each loses the condition for its existence. Just think: can any one contradictory aspect of a thing or of a concept in the human mind exist independently? Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life. Without "above", there would be no "below"; without "below", there would be no "above". Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, there would be no misfortune. Without facility, there would be no difficulty; without difficulty, there would be no facility. Without landlords, there would be no tenant-peasants; without tenant-peasants, there would be no landlords. Without the bourgeoisie, there would be no proletariat; without the proletariat, there would be no bourgeoisie. Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or semi-colonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations. It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand, they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent.[71]

Since they are "interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent", they form a unity, a dynamic whole. In other words, they can co-exist in a single entity.

The unity of opposites, however, is not absolute but *relative*, that is, temporary and conditional. It is so because, being a dynamic relationship of interaction of contradictory aspects, the unity is only the temporary result

of such interaction under present given conditions. But any given conditions are not static but dynamic. When they change, the result of the interaction of contradictory aspects will change accordingly. That is why Mao says, "the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary, and relative."[72] In other words, the unity of opposites depends on conditionality, that is, the relative stability of given conditions. As long as these given conditions remain relatively constant, the result of the interaction of contradictory aspects, namely the unity, will also be relatively the same. In this sense, the relativity of the unity of opposites is the characteristic of any contradiction.

3.42. The Absoluteness of the Struggle of Opposites

The full meaning of the unity of opposites does not end with the understanding of (the relativity of) the unity. That is, contradictory aspects are mutually dependent; they form a dynamic whole and co-exist in a single unity. On the other hand, there is, according to Mao, another even more important relationship between opposites, namely, 'the struggle of opposites', which is perpetual and not temporary or relative.

While contradictory aspects form a dynamic unity, they still oppose and interact with each other. Their opposition or interaction is manifested by two kinds of struggle: relative rest and conspicuous change, or quantitative change and qualitative change. As Mao describes it:

> There are two modes of movement in all things, that of relative rest and that of conspicuous change. Both are caused by the struggle between the two contradictory elements contained in a thing. When the thing is in the first mode of movement, it is undergoing only quantitative and not qualitative change and consequently presents the outward appearance of being at rest. When the thing is in the second mode of movement, the quantitative change of the first mode has already reached a culminating point and gives rise to the dissolution of the thing as an entity and thereupon a qualitative change ensues, hence the appearance of a conspicuous change. Such unity, solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, etc. as we see in daily life, are all the appearances of things in the state of quantitative change. On the other hand, the dissolution of unity, that is, the destruction of this solidity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity and attraction, and the change of each into its opposite are all the appearances of things in the state of qualitative change.[73]

Thus one mode of the struggle of opposites is relative rest (or quantitative change), which does not involve any change in the essence or nature of that contradiction. There is the "outward appearance of being at rest", because the principal aspect remains the same while the non-principal aspects may

undergo change. For instance, some non-principal aspects may disappear or be resolved and others may emerge.

On the other hand, there is another mode of the struggle of opposites. When a quantitative change has reached a culminating point, it will take the form of a conspicuous change (or qualitative change), which will involve a change in the essence or nature of that contradiction. That is, the principal aspect of the old contradiction is changed; and a new principal aspect will emerge and become predominant. As a result the old contradiction will be superseded by the new one. Mao describes how this happens:

> We often speak of 'the new superseding the old' . . . The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external conditions – that is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while the old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly.[74]

While acquiring a new essence or nature, the new contradiction is not absolute either, but still relative, though in its new relative rest. In fact, as soon as the new contradiction emerges, it begins its own process of the struggle of opposites, in the form of both relative rest and the conspicuous change. In other words, the struggle of opposites is *absolute* because all contradictions are constantly undergoing a process of transformation or 'transformationality', which is the fundamental law underlying the development of any contradiction.

3.43. The Transformationality of Contradiction

But what is transformationality? It is nothing but the principle of 'interchangeability' based on ever-changing 'conditionality'. As such, it is the most universal and important law of contradiction, and this for two reasons: (1) it guides both the relativity of the unity and the absoluteness of the struggle, and (2) it operates in both the simple process of a simple contradiction and the complex process of several contradictions.

First, the above discussion of the relativity of the unity and the absoluteness of the struggle has indicated that they are guided by the most funda-

mental law of contradiction, namely, transformationality. This is obvious in the case of the struggle of opposites. For the two modes of struggle – relative rest and conspicuous change – are constantly changing; the former leads to the latter, producing a new contradiction. All of this is part of the process of the transformationality of contradiction. The same is true of the unity of opposites. The unity of opposites remains a unity as long as the interaction of its opposites can produce a relative stability. But when the given conditions change, the unity (or better the old unity) may disappear, and a new unity may emerge. Viewed from this perspective, the unity of opposites is also guided by the law of transformationality.

Secondly, the law of transformationality also operates in both the simple process of a single contradiction and the complex process of several contradictions. Let us begin with the former. Since any contradiction in reality is particular, it always exists in concrete and definite conditions. That is, it is under certain given conditions that its principal and non-principal aspects are interrelated and interacting so as to form a dynamic relationship of interaction, or dynamic whole. However, as explained above, the given conditions are never static but always dynamic. When they change, they will affect both the principal and non-principal aspects as well as their interaction. It is possible for the principal and non-principal aspects to transform themselves into each other. Mao explains it this way:

> But this situation is not static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly. In a given process or at a given stage in the development of a contradiction, A is the principal aspect and B is the non-principal aspect; at another stage or in another process the roles are reversed.[75]

Thus the process of transformation takes place when the principal aspect is transformed into the non-principal aspect; or the non-principal aspect is transformed into the principal. To illustrate this kind of transformation, Mao uses an event from the history of China:

> At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favourable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favourable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favourable new situation; thus a difficult situation yields place to a favourable one. This is what happened after the failure of the revolution in China in 1927 and during the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a difficult position, but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation between China and Japan. Conversely, favourable conditions can be transformed into a difficulty if the

revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus the victory of the revolution of 1924–27 turned into defeat. The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the Southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934.[76]

As a result of this kind of transformation, a new contradiction – superseding the old one – emerges, whose essence or nature is determined by its new principal aspect. A similar transformation may take place in the process of human knowledge. As Mao writes, "The same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge . . . by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application."[77] All this shows that the law of transformation guides the development of a simple process of a contradiction, that is, of the principal and the non-principal aspects of any contradiction.

Furthermore, transformationality also operates in a complex process of contradictions, that is, between the principal and non-principal contradictions. A change in the given conditions of a complex process might give rise to a transformation of the principal and the non-principal contradictions. Mao points out that such transformations of contradictions are found in the development of society.

In capitalist society, capitalism has changed its position from being a subordinate force in the old feudal era to being the dominant force, and the nature of society has accordingly changed from feudal to capitalist. In the new, capitalist era, the feudal forces changed from their former dominant position to a subordinate one, gradually dying out. Such was the case, for example, in Britain and France. With the development of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie changes from being a new class playing a progressive role to being an old class playing a reactionary role, until it is finally overthrown by the proletariat and becomes a class deprived of privately owned means of production and stripped of power, when it, too, gradually dies out. The proletariat, which is much more numerous than the bourgeoisie and grows simultaneously with it but under its rule, is a new force which, initially subordinate to the bourgeoisie, gradually gains strength, becomes an independent class playing the leading role in history, and finally seizes political power and becomes the ruling class. Thereupon the nature of society changes and the old capitalist society becomes the new socialist society.[78]

The same thing happened when imperialism entered China:

Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China

from a semi-colony into an independent country, whereas imperialism will be overthrown and old China will inevitably change into new China.[79]

And again, Mao points out such a transformation of contradiction in China's history:

Instances of such reciprocal transformation are found in our past experience. The Ching Dynasty which ruled China for nearly three hundred years was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911, and the revolutionary Tung Meng Hui under Sun Yat-sen's leadership was victorious for a time. In the Revolutionary War of 1924–1927, the revolutionary forces of the Communist-Kuomintang alliance in the South changed from being weak to being strong and won victory in the Northern Expedition, while the Northern warlords who once ruled the roost were overthrown. In 1927 the people's forces led by the Communist Party were greatly reduced numerically under the attacks of Kuomintang reaction, but with the elimination of opportunism within their ranks they gradually grew again. In the revolutionary base areas under Communist leadership, the peasants have been transformed from being the ruled to being the rulers, while the landlords have undergone a reverse transformation. It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old.[80]

With these and numerous others examples, Mao shows convincingly the importance of the universal transformationality of contradiction. For it operates in the development of a simple process of a contradiction as well as of a complex process of many contradictions.

Convinced of the universal validity of transformationality of contradiction, Mao further states that the most basic contradictions in society also undergo this kind of transformation. Since this point involves a distinctive interpretation of one of the fundamental principles of Marxism, let us quote Mao's rather lengthy passage:

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. There is a mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role.[81]

Mao continues to explain why:

When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The creation of advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, 'without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement'. When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (policies, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also – and indeed must – recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism.[82]

Thus while maintaining the primacy of matter over spirit, of practice over theory, of economic base over superstructure, Mao makes it absolutely clear that under certain conditions, one must recognize the primacy of spirit over matter, of theory over practice, of superstructure over economic base. This is a very important point which we shall discuss in our critical evaluation below.

Finally, a corollary to the law of transformationality is worth noting. In the light of the importance of transformationality of contradiction, Mao maintains that different contradictions should be handled differently. In his essay, 'On Contradiction', he says,

Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism is resolved by the method of national revolutionary war; the contradiction between the working class and the peasant class in socialist society is resolved by the method of collectivization and mechanization in agriculture; contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism; the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly.[83]

The same point is even more strongly emphasized in another essay by Mao, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People', the purpose of which is solely to elaborate on the principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions in China's socialist society.

In applying this principle of handling different contradictions through different methods, Mao offers a practical suggestion: to divide the variety of

contradictions into two basic categories. As to their nature, he classifies contradictions into two types: antagonistic and non-antagonistic. The former involves irreconcilably contradictory aspects, and thereby contains its own destruction, that is, eventual dissolution. Such a contradiction cannot be resolved unless it "assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution".[84] As a result, a new thing or contradiction will emerge. On the other hand, non-antagonistic contradiction involves not irreconcilable but reconcilable contradictory aspects. That is, the interaction of its contradictory aspects does not develop into one of open antagonism or eventual revolution.

Being two different kinds of contradiction, they should be handled differently. Otherwise, non-antagonistic contradictions may be transformed into antagonistic ones; and under certain conditions, vice versa. In explaining the possibility of such transformation, Mao writes:

> However, we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of the specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above to everything. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the difference in the nature of the contradiction. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.[85]

Thus in dealing with contradictions in society, Mao maintains that every effort should be made to distinguish between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions and to resolve them accordingly.

With this, we have completed the presentation of Mao's theory of dialectic. Based on the premise that contradiction is 'a dynamic relationship of interaction', or 'relationality', it includes three main parts: the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, and the dialectic of contradiction.

The universality of contradiction reveals that contradiction is *universal*. It is present in all processes in objective reality (nature and society) and in subjective reality (thought); and it permeates all these processes from beginning to end.

The particularity of contradiction reveals that contradiction is *'particular'*. Each contradiction and each of its aspects has its peculiar characteristics. In studying particularity, therefore, "we must give attention to the distinction between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions and to the distinction between the principal aspect and the non-principal aspect of a contradiction".[86]

The dialectic of contradiction reveals that in any given conditions, the unity of opposites is 'relative'; the struggle of opposites is 'absolute'; and they are both guided by the law of '*transformationality*' of contradiction. In other words, the relativity of the unity is manifested by the fact that the opposites coexist, interrelated and interacting among one another only in a relative stability. The absoluteness of the struggle is manifested by the fact that the struggle is found in both relative rest (quantitative change) and conspicuous change (qualitative change). Finally, it is possible, under certain conditions, for the principal and the non-principal contradictory aspects, as well as the principal and the non-principal contradictions, to be transformed into each other. When such a process of transformation takes place, a new contradiction emerges, thus beginning its own process of development. As a consequence, it is important to know different contradictions, and their different developments, so as to resolve them accordingly. All of this reveals, and is also based on, Mao's fundamental insight: "*Reality is Contradiction*" and/or "*Contradiction is Reality*."

CHAPTER 4

ON MAO'S METHODOLOGY

Having completed our presentation of Mao's theory of dialectic (based almost entirely on his own texts), we shall now make our critical evaluation of it. Specifically, we shall discuss the significance of Mao's methodology, his concept of contradiction, and his theory of dialectic in the next three chapters. In so doing, we hope to discover the strengths and weaknesses of Mao's theory of dialectic as a whole.

This chapter, however, deals only with Mao's method, synthetic praxis. But in order to evaluate it properly, a general introduction to the methodology of Chinese philosophy is necessary. Only then can we focus on the very soul of his synthetic praxis, namely, flexibility; and conclude by pointing out some of the difficulties in its application.

4.1. THE METHOD OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

Before launching our discussion, a preliminary observation is in order. One would try in vain to find a 'method of Chinese philosophy', a method that has been followed by all Chinese philosophical schools.

The reason is that there is no Chinese philosophy as such[1] and hence no 'method of Chinese philosophy'. Therefore, the term, 'method of Chinese philosophy' is used here to refer to general tendencies or perspectives which characterize how the Chinese, especially philosophers, think or philosophize. In other words, 'the method of Chinese philosophy' or 'the Chinese way of thinking' is constituted by the following – all closely interrelated and complementary one with the other – perspectives.

4.11. Synthetic

The first characteristic of the Chinese way of thinking is that it is 'synthetic' in its emphasis on the whole rather than its parts, harmony rather than opposition. This synthetic emphasis is manifested first in the Chinese view of the universe, society and man. The universe is always conceived of not as a static entity, existing out-there, but rather as a dynamic whole in which all things – heaven, earth, man and all other existences – are living, or in process. As Professor D. Bodde rightly observes, "Prominent in all Chinese philosophical

schools is the belief that the universe is in a constant state of flux."[2] As a matter of fact, this dynamic view of the universe has its origin in ancient Chinese tradition. According to the *I-Ching* (which itself is a treatise on change), everything changes constantly: "Heaven and Earth undergo their changes."[3] In the *Lao-tzu*, it is stated, "The Tao produced one. One produced two. Two produced three. Three produced all things."[4] However, while being dynamic, all constituents of the universe form a harmonious whole, a unity of nature and man, a synthesis of all existences and non-existences. That is why in Chinese philosophy there is no dichotomy between nature and man, or between supernatural and natural.[5] Furthermore, society, which is part of the universe is also conceived of as a moral whole consisting of a large number of families, which in turn consist of individuals. Man, as part of society and thereby of the universe, is conceived of as a harmony of feelings, desires and reason. In short, the Chinese conception of the universe, society and man is synthetic and as such, it emphasizes the whole rather than its parts though the parts are always considered in relation to the whole.

The synthetic perspective also stresses harmony rather than conflict. The Chinese mind tends to synthesize or unite things, rather than to divide them. This is evident in all major philosophical schools. Confucianism, especially the Confucian theory of 'the Golden Mean', strives almost solely to achieve social harmony or social order (although achieved through virtue rather than through law). The *Yin-yang* tradition 'synthesizes' the two principles of *yin* and *yang* and the five elements into a harmonious whole. Above all, the *Tao* of Taoism can be viewed as the 'ultimate synthesis' with its capacity to absorb all things.[6] Thus, the Chinese mind tends to look for similarities rather than differences, complementarity rather than opposition, harmony rather than conflict. In other words, in its approach to reality, the Chinese mind prefers a 'both-and' approach to an 'either-or' dichotomy. This perhaps explains why Chinese philosophy places so much emphasis on achieving harmony and order in the universe, in society and in man himself.

However, this synthetic perspective should not be interpreted as meaning that the Chinese mind denies the value of analysis. For any type of synthesis at all, one needs data to ground judgements and inferences. Analysis is involved here. Thus the Chinese way of thinking does not deny the value of analysis, because it is viewed not as opposed to, but complementary to, synthesis. Indeed, without analysis, no synthesis is possible. Similarly, the Chinese mind does not consider that 'the parts', 'conflict', 'opposition', 'either-or', etc., are purely negative; they are also positive in the sense that together with their counterparts they form a whole, balanced perspective of reality.

4.12. Intuition

Intuition is another dimension of the Chinese way of thinking. However, the term 'intuition' should not be understood as a primitive or instinctive hunch, that is, as irrational or anti-scientific thinking. Rather, intuition is used here to refer to a direct, immediate apprehension of the totality of the thing or situation concerned, resulting from reflection upon life experience. Viewed as such, intuition seems to display three distinctive features. The first is its 'immediacy' or 'directness'. Faced with a thing or situation, the Chinese mind tends to apprehend its meaning immediately and directly, without the explicit aid of any reasoning process according to formal logic. But this does not mean that the Chinese concept of intuition denies the value of reason or logic; in fact, the Chinese mind is very 'rationalistic'. Without any supernatural or transcendental power to rely on, the Chinese mind has almost absolute faith in man's rational process of understanding the universe, society and man himself.[7] Furthermore, in all its thinking and reasoning, the Chinese mind follows its own logic or rationale which is rooted in strong social and moral codes. Thus it is not correct to assert that since the Chinese have not developed a formal logic, their way of thinking is illogical. But it is true that the Chinese mind tends to understand reality intuitively rather than formal-logically.

Another distinctive feature of the Chinese concept of intuition is its 'totality' or 'wholeness'. What is intuited is always a single whole or totality which is a multifaceted synthesis of immediate, direct experiences. As such, intuition has an all-embracing character that includes all aspects of the thing or situation involved, though all these aspects may not be explicit. That is, the content of the totality or wholeness of intuition contains what is known or determinate, as well as what is unknown or indeterminate. But what is important and emphasized in intuition is the apprehension of this manifold whole rather than its various constituent parts. Thus the totality or wholeness which is synthesized from its various parts has priority; and the parts are always seen within their totality or wholeness.

The third distinctive feature is that Chinese intuition is reflective and dynamic. It is reflective because intuition, insofar as it is a direct, immediate apprehension, is not a definitive single act of understanding, but rather the result of a process of reflection based on long, lived experience. In this sense, intuition can be considered to be experiential. As such, the quality of intuition depends on a person's living experience as well as his ability to reflect. This point is exemplified by practically all Chinese philosophical writings,

which are often in the form of conclusions or sayings, resulting from long and profound observations and reflections on personal experiences. In fact, Chinese philosophy is full of proverbs which are distilled from centuries of vital experiences.[8]

The Chinese concept of intuition is also dynamic, because the totality or wholeness that intuition reveals at any moment does not exhaust the entire content of what is intuited. In other words, any intuition contains only relativity and transitoriness. Since reality itself is in process, any intuitive understanding of it has to be in process; it is, namely, dynamic. Maybe this explains why no Chinese philosopher has ever created any "absolute" philosophical system which claims to contain all truth. On the contrary, the Chinese mind tends to absorb whatever is good, regardless of its source. For, although truth is absolute, its understanding is relative; thus, all of truth is constantly being enriched.

4.13. Historical

The third trait of the Chinese way of thinking involves a constant reference to history. According to Chinese philosophy, since man is an historical being and is influenced by the development of history, history and historical method are considered indispensable for obtaining reliable knowledge or truth, and so they receive heavy emphasis. This emphasis is seen in the high esteem in which all major Chinese philosophical schools hold tradition as symbolized by the so-called (five) Classics.[9]

From the beginning of Chinese philosophy, these Classics have enjoyed great authority. For example, the Master's (i.e., Confucius) frequent themes of discourse were the Odes, the History, and the maintenance of the Rules of Propriety. Confucius himself says, "I am not one who was born in a possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity (i.e., the Classics), and earnest in seeking it there."[10] Then throughout later history, the Classics gained more and more authority and eventually became the norms which guided not only morality but also social and political behavior. Thus, history and philosophy have become intimately interrelated. The knowledge of history or 'antiquity' becomes one of the most important tests of scholarship both for the historian and for the philosopher. It is thus natural for Chinese philosophical writings to make frequent use of historical allusions from the Classics as providing models for subsequent generations.

As a consequence of this consciousness of history, the Chinese mind seems to give more credence to the past than to the present or to the future. It is well known that Chinese historical documents, such as the *Book of History*[11]

and the *Twenty-Four Dynastic Histories*[12] (the *Erh-shih-ssu shih* 廿四史) are some of the finest records in the world. It is thus understandable that the Chinese tend to judge the present by the precedents offered by the past, because the latter form the norm. It also explains why the Chinese have little interest in the future or in the after-life; the future is beyond what can be immediately grasped and thus cannot be related to the past. The Chinese way of thinking tends to begin with the past and move to the present; only in the light of the past and present is the future, or better the immediate future, dealt with.

Another corollary of the emphasis on history is the Chinese insistence on conformity rather than on creativity. If the past is the norm, if historical precedents prime over all others, it is natural for the Chinese to judge everything according to traditional norms. This basic philosophical stance conditions Chinese thinking: it is better to imitate the past both in content and expression, than to invent anything which differs from the past. As a result, most Chinese philosophical writings are nothing more than commentaries or explanations of history or of the Classics. A philosophical work is considered valuable if it abounds in historical allusions or if it makes references to classical phrases or idioms.

4.14. Practical

The final trait of the Chinese way of thinking is 'practical' in terms of pragmatism, concreteness ('actuality') and praxis. First, since the Chinese (people) are primarily oriented towards 'this-world', the Chinese mind tends to adopt a very pragmatic world view – an orientation toward what is useful or beneficial to man and human relationships. In fact, this humanistic concern is evident from the earliest philosophical days;[13] and it reaches its fullest development during the time of Confucius. The same is true of Taoism and Buddhism, which, despite their naturalism and 'other-worldliness' respectively, are both humanistic. In this sense, to be pragmatic is to be '*humanistic*'. That is why Professor W. T. Chan can rightly say, "if one word could characterize the entire history of Chinese philosophy, that word would be humanism."[14]

Secondly, to be practical also implies putting one's feet on solid ground, to be concrete rather than abstract. That is why the Chinese mind tends to perceive reality by relying heavily on the five senses, especially vision. In any concrete situation, one must open his eyes, observe external activities or phenomena and then synthesize patterns of things or events. It is from empirical observations and syntheses that one acquires concrete and experiential knowledge. From this perspective, it is easy to understand why the Chinese

seem to pay more attention to 'particular' than to 'universal', that is, to concrete existences rather than to universal concepts or metaphysical speculation.[15]

Finally, to be practical is to be praxiological. The Chinese mind puts great emphasis on the unity of theory and practice, or correspondence of word and action. This tradition had its origins long before Confucius. The *Book of History* states that "It is not difficult to know but difficult to act",[16] which seems to place more emphasis on action. Influenced by this tradition, Confucius says, "He (the superior man) acts before he speaks and afterwards speaks according to his action."[17] Elsewhere, he says, "My way is to hear their words and look at their conduct."[18] Thus Confucius clearly teaches that words and actions should correspond. His theory of 'rectification of names' amounts to a doctrine which stresses correspondence between names and actualities, and therefore between word and action, or between theory and practice. In the Taoist tradition, Chuang-tzu preaches that man should show "sageliness within and kingliness without".[19] This emphasis on the unity of theory and practice is further developed in Neo-Confucianism. Chu Hsi, a major proponent of this philosophy, says, "knowledge and action always require each other".[20] Wang Yang-ming goes the further step of advocating that knowledge and action are one: "Knowledge is the beginning of action, and action is the completion of knowledge."[21]

4.2. ON MAO'S SYNTHETIC PRAXIS

In the light of the above discussion of the Chinese way of thinking, our critical evaluation of Mao's synthetic praxis will consist of three points concerning: (1) its general nature, (2) its very soul, 'flexibility' and (3) difficulties in its application.

4.21. A General Remark

We would like to affirm that Mao's synthetic praxis is essentially Chinese. This statement should not be even necessary, if not for a common view (held by many of both Mao's followers and adversaries, and perhaps even by himself) that synthetic praxis is both Marxist and anti-Chinese (or non-Chinese). This view is partly true and partly false, and as such, it could be extremely misleading. However, since a larger issue (i.e., the Marxism-ness and Chineseness of Mao's thought as a whole)[22] will be discussed in detail later, we will restrict ourselves here only to the points concerning Mao's synthetic praxis.

There is no dispute over the first half of the statements, namely, Mao's

synthetic praxis is Marxist, and this is obvious. Ever since his conversion to Marxism in his youth, Mao remained a Marxist throughout his life, convinced that Marxism, if properly adapted, could cure all of China's ills. Such a firm belief in Marxism is also manifested by two facts concerning his method. One, his synthetic praxis consists of many Marxist revolutionary techniques, with special emphasis on (a) flexibility and (b) concrete analysis of concrete situations – a revolutionary method first worked out and applied by Lenin. Two, the exposition of the synthetic praxis is full of Marxist terms such as "praxis", "dialectic", "superstructure". All this makes Mao's method part of the Marxist method.

On the other hand, to be Marxist does not necessarily make Mao's synthetic praxis anti-Chinese (or non-Chinese). But why, then, do so many people have such a non-sequitur misunderstanding? One of the main reasons is perhaps that the main goal of Mao's revolutionary mission is to save China from two fundamental evils: semi-feudal status and imperialism. To achieve the former, China must achieve a total transformation in terms of political system, social structures and traditional values. Such a total transformation in turn dictates that China be cut off – at least in the initial phase – from her traditional past and create her own yet-to-be-shaped future. Only in this sense can one consider Mao's revolutionary thought, including his synthetic praxis (a part of his entire thought), to be in the anti-Chinese tradition.

However, this is only one side of the coin. If we go a step further, Mao's synthetic praxis reveals something more, namely, Mao's way of thinking is strikingly Chinese, in both its content (i.e., essential characteristics) and its effect. First, the above discussion of the way of Chinese thinking reveals that its essential characteristics coincide almost perfectly with those of Mao's way of thinking. The following chart will help to illustrate this point:

<table>
<tr><th>Chinese way of thinking</th><th>Mao's way of thinking</th></tr>
<tr><td>Synthetic</td><td>Synthetic</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intuitive</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Historical</td><td>Historical</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Practical</td><td>Concrete</td></tr>
<tr><td>Praxiological</td></tr>
</table>

What a perfect similarity! Two essential characteristics (i.e., synthetic and historical) are the same in both methods. Another two essential characteristics of Mao's synthetic praxis (i.e., concrete and praxiological) are actually equivalent to the practical perspective of the Chinese way of thinking. The only major difference seems to be that Mao's synthetic praxis lacks the emphasis on the intuitive nature of Chinese thinking. In other words, from this concise comparison of their respective contents, we can safely assert that while being Marxist, Mao's synthetic praxis is not only not anti-Chinese (non-Chinese); on the contrary, it is very Chinese.

This assertion is further reinforced by the effect produced by Mao's synthetic praxis. Just as Chinese philosophers are both unsystematic and flexible in their approach to reality, so is Mao. But a word of explanation is in order here. It is not good for Chinese philosophers – even such great thinkers as Confucius, Mencius or Mao – to be unsystematic; but this is beside the point. The point is that Mao's way of thinking is *rooted* deeply and firmly in the context of Chinese culture. On the other hand, synthetic praxis provides Mao with an extremely flexible world-view or mentality with a great emphasis upon the whole, history and praxis, by which to understand, evaluate and change reality. Further explanation of this idea leads us to our second critical point, a discussion of 'flexibility' which is the very soul of Mao's synthetic praxis.

4.22. Flexibility

We shall treat two aspects of flexibility as related to synthetic praxis. First, Mao's synthetic praxis is flexible in its choice of methods; that is, it is not restricted to any single method, but rather is receptive to all methods. Secondly, its flexibility is manifested in its four multi-dimensional processes of triple movements.

As explained in the last chapter, since Mao views the universe, society and man not as static but as totally dynamic and ever-changing, he rightly maintains that the methods one chooses to study them must be equally flexible. Such flexibility in choosing proper methods should be dictated by each concrete situation and circumstance. For a method is nothing but "a device or procedure, to solve a problem or answer a question" or "the manner of proceeding in any particular field".[23] But any "particular field" or any "problem or question", especially those related to men and society at large, are always concrete, complex and changing. Therefore, it is logical and necessary not to be restricted to any one single method, but to choose methods suited to each concrete situation. Furthermore, when concrete situations and circumstances

change, the problems or questions arising from them also change. Consequently, the methods of understanding and resolving these problems should change accordingly.

On the other hand, while Mao maintains such flexibility in choosing proper methods according to concrete situations and circumstances, the dialectical nature of his synthetic praxis seems to make frequent use of two particular methods, known in Western philosophy as the phenomenological method and the inductive method.

Mao's synthetic praxis demands the phenomenological method because he puts great emphasis on observation and analysis of concrete situations and circumstances. Both direct and synthetic observation are needed for a reflective description of the essence or nature of things, that is, the relationships created by the interaction of internal and external aspects of things. This is generally in accordance with the essence of the phenomenological method as understood in Western philosophy[24] (though Mao does not seem to concern himself with its systematic understanding). For the main principle of the phenomenological method, as Bocheński writes, "consists in going back to the things themselves".[25] "Going back to the things themselves", however, involves three activities: observation, description and essence. The first is to observe what is given directly to intellectual observation. This is important because observation is "the necessary foundation of all true cognition".[26] Secondly, one must describe or articulate what is observed *objectively*. To be objective he must concentrate exclusively on the object while eliminating everything subjective. Of course, the objectivity that can be achieved in the phenomenological method cannot be absolute either.[27] The third activity is to grasp the essence of what is observed. Essence in the phenomenological sense, however, comprises everything that necessarily coheres in the phenomenon, that is, the fundamental underlying structure of the object, including all qualities, etc.[28]

Besides the phenomenological method, Mao's synthetic praxis also makes frequent use of the inductive method. Here, the inductive method refers to a form of inference by means of which statements are made. It is a process which proceeds either from the totality of individuals of the class in question to the general (as in complete induction) or from some individuals which do not comprise all elements of the class in question to the general.[29] Thus we can see why the inductive method – understood as such – is frequently employed in Mao's synthetic praxis. Mao's synthetic praxis is based on his theory of knowledge, consisting of perception and conceptualization, both of which involve constant observation, analysis, comparison, and making of

judgments; all of which must be achieved through inference; and a process of inference is nothing but a form of induction.[30] In other words, Mao's synthetic praxis employs the inductive method because the purpose of his synthetic praxis is to try to infer from what is known (or observed) that which is unknown (or not yet observed). The inductive method proves to be a very useful means to achieve this end.

However, the methods which Mao's synthetic praxis may employ are not limited to these two methods. Other methods – such as the deductive method, the reductive method and others – may also be used, when and if they become useful and necessary. Mao seems to believe that no philosophy should be limited to one and only one method because both reality and the correct thinking of it involve issues much more complex than those which can be dealt with by any one method, no matter how sound it may be. On this point, Bocheński, after having expounded upon the methods of contemporary thought, holds a similar opinion:

> It follows further that it might perhaps be possible to speak of an authentic philosophical method, if only philosophers would not commit themselves *a priori* to one of the many available methods, but would instead, following the tradition of the great thinkers, consider a phenomenological analysis. But it would not stop there, on the one hand applying analysis to what exists and to its existence, on the other hand – conscious of human fallibility – using linguistic analysis widely and finally appealing to the results of the reductive sciences.[31]

Secondly, the flexibility of Mao's synthetic praxis is also manifested in its four multi-dimensional processes of triple movements: synthetic, historical, concrete and praxiological. As our presentation has clearly shown, each of these four processes is not a single act but rather a process consisting of three movements. Thus, by faithfully following all of these movements, Mao's synthetic praxis indeed proves highly flexible in two senses: both dynamic and practical.

Synthetic praxis is dynamic because it focuses on multi-dimensional movements. It must proceed from the whole to its parts and back to the whole; from the objective to the subjective and back to the objective; from the past to the present and anticipating the future; and from practice to theory and back to practice. Furthermore, all of these movements are not isolated but interrelated. All this, while it may sound very abstract on paper, constitutes a very dynamic way of knowing reality which is always complex indeed. In other words, in such a multi-dimensional process of triple movements, Mao's synthetic praxis not only can use any and all suitable and efficient methods; it can also cover all dimensions of reality – both subjective

and objective, both practical and theoretical, both past and present as well as future, hence providing a comprehensive understanding of reality. As a result, dynamism and flexibility become 'one', constituting the very soul of Mao's synthetic praxis.

Besides being dynamic, the flexibility of synthetic praxis is also manifested in its practicability, which results from a twofold function of social practice. First, social practice serves as the starting point of synthetic praxis. Since social practice for Mao implies all activities related to practical life – in terms of material production, social transformation and scientific work[32] – it provides a solid foundation for knowing and changing reality. The second function of social practice is to verify the validity of any decisions or policies made. Verification involves a return to social practice (but for the second time in the process of social practice-theory-social practice) to test the correctness of our knowledge, decision or policies and their implications. As such, social practice proves to be the touchstone of the unity of theory and practice, i.e., praxis. In other words, in the very application of social practice, flexibility and practicability become 'one'.

4.23. Difficulties

There are two difficulties, one concerning its application, the other, its limitation. The first is that Mao's synthetic praxis as a method is extremely hard to understand and harder still to employ. Hard to understand, because Mao's synthetic praxis, scattered throughout his writing, is not systematically and logically presented. Harder to employ, because it does not provide any concrete or tangible guidance in its application. How does one know what particular method is useful and necessary in a concrete situation or circumstance? What happens when different, even conflicting opinions or views concerning the same situations and circumstances arise? What is the criterion in such a case? To answer all these questions Mao would first admit that it is difficult to use his synthetic praxis, but he would then advise that one go directly to the concrete situation and circumstances to study and to gain experience, to think for himself and to learn from others, and to discover and invent new ways and means. Only through such an arduous process can one hope to have a correct understanding of problems and eventually arrive at proper solutions. That is why Mao often has harsh words for those who do not follow this difficult course:

> The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolutions and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt

what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what could have been done well.[33]

Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of concrete things, they regard general truth as emerging out of the void, they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know truth.[34]

Thus, the whole process of Mao's synthetic praxis involves not only intellectual vigor but also practical application, always focusing one's attention on the concrete realization of both. In other words, Mao firmly believes that experience is absolutely essential, but experience alone is not enough. It must be analyzed and synthesized into theory. To test its validity theory must be put into practice once again in concrete conditions. However, such a process is not foolproof. When one fails he must learn from his failure; when he succeeds he should make further progress. For both failure and success are part of the whole process of Mao's synthetic praxis.[35]

But after all this is said, the difficulty remains. For such flexibility – which is indeed the strength of Mao's synthetic praxis – does pose tremendous problems in its application, especially for most ordinary people who can scarcely, if ever, master all the necessary steps demanded by Mao's synthetic praxis. As a result, only a chosen few can properly apply Mao's synthetic praxis in dealing with various complex issues or problems of social development.

The second difficulty entails a limitation. As has been explained, Mao's synthetic praxis proves highly effective and realistic in dealing with concrete issues or problems related to man and society. But when dealing with problems that are abstract or metaphysical in nature, Mao's synthetic praxis becomes difficultly applicable. On this point, perhaps, Mao would say that his synthetic praxis is not geared for such abstract questions; nor was he interested in them. This attitude of Mao is understandable for two reasons. The first is that Mao was totally occupied throughout his life with the concrete problem of the Chinese revolution. He considered anything not directly related to this cause as useless or irrelevant. The second possible reason (which is itself metaphysical) is that being a Marxist atheist, Mao did not believe in anything supernatural or transcendental.[36] Thus he tended to view the universe, society and man in pragmatic terms, which made him very practical as far as the material dimension of human life is concerned, on the one hand, and, on the other, very skeptical about or indifferent

to the spiritual dimension of human life regarding such matters as religion or abstract science. Thus it is of ultimate importance to realize both the strengths and the limitations of Mao's synthetic praxis as a methodology.

CHAPTER 5

A PHILOSOPHICAL CRITIQUE OF CONTRADICTION

Mao's concept of contradiction is not only the key to his theory of dialectic, but also the very kernel of his entire philosphy, and indeed, of the entire body of his thought and political activities. To explain this central term, however, we will begin with a presentation of 'dialectical ideas' in Chinese thought (which is necessary for our discussion both in this chapter and in the next). The presentation aims to show that while there is no systematic, continuous development of 'dialectic' as a philosophical term, method or system throughout the history of Chinese philosophy, Chinese thought as a whole is essentially dialectical. To substantiate this claim we will discuss six philosophical ideas (contained in various schools) with the implicit premise that although they are not directly related to each other, they together constitute a 'dialecticality' or 'relationality' which is a distinguishing characteristic of Chinese thought. Only in the light of all this, will we be able to make a critique of Mao's concept of contradiction as a philosophical term.

5.1. 'DIALECTICAL IDEAS' IN CHINESE THOUGHT

To illustrate the 'dialecticality' or 'relationality' of Chinese thought, the following six important philosophical ideas will be discussed: change, negation, unity, relationality (or human relationality), the *chung-yung* and dialectic.

5.11. Change

The first, and perhaps the earliest, philosophical idea is 'change', or better 'universal and permanent change' as expounded primarily in the *I-Ching* and the *Tao-te ching*. The concept of change is central to the *I-Ching*; as a matter of fact, 'change' gives it its name and determines its system of thought. For, according to the *I-Ching*, change is both universal and permanent. Here we are immediately reminded of Heraclitus' aphorism, "Everything flows". Change is universal, because everything changes, grows and transforms. This phenomenon of universal change can be seen in both nature and human events such as the alternation of day and night, the succession of the four seasons, as well as the human process of birth, living and death. In other words, universal change

pervades natural and human events, because "Heaven and earth undergo their change, and the four seasons complete their function",[1] and change is 'the begetter of all begetting'.[2]

Change is also permanent, which is one of the main teachings of the *Tao-te ching*. First, all things come from Tao, because "Tao produced the One. The One produced the two. The two produced the three. And the three produced the ten thousand things."[3] In this sense, all things can be considered as the results of change. Furthermore, all things not only are changeable and in constant flux, but also develop according to the law of nature, i.e., Tao. While a myriad of things are different and even conflicting, Tao transforms, harmonizes and combines them into a unity, but a unity based on a permanent state of change or 'self-transformation'. Viewed from this perspective, change or permanent change becomes the characteristic of the universe, which, according to Chuang-tzu, is not merely static nature, but dynamic, "self-transformed nature" or "self-transforming nature".

Furthermore, the concept of change (or universal and permanent change) has two specific nuances: one concerning its nature, the other its direction. First, the nature of change is essentially an inner tendency according to which the movement of development takes place naturally and spontaneously. Thus, it is not correct to think that change in Chinese thought is simply movement or development; nor is it merely an external, normative principle that imprints itself upon all phenomena in the universe. Its opposite is neither rest nor standstill, for these are only two aspects of change itself. On the other hand, change can be considered as natural movement or development which can only reverse itself by going against 'its nature', or 'its inner tendency'. Therefore, the opposite of change is not cessation of movement or development, but movement or development in the form of regression. For example, the opposite of change is growth of what ought to decrease, the downfall of what ought to rule. Secondly, the direction of change is not linear but cyclical. That is, change does not take place in a one-dimensional or linear direction. Rather it is a continuous, integral, cyclical movement, which always returns to its starting point like a planet in its orbit, or the course of the four seasons. Since this cyclical movement always returns to its starting point, it is not exactly 'spiral' which implies the idea of exalting the new at the expense of the old, or the future at the expense of the past.[4] In other words, the universe does not proceed forward; but rather in a circle around its own axis. Thus, the entire universe can be considered as a continuous, cyclical chain in which nothing is absolutely completed. This is symbolized by the last hexagram of the *I-Ching*, the *wu-chi* (無極) hexagram, which means 'without end' or 'into infinity'.[5]

On the other hand, amid the phenomena of universal and permanent change, there is 'stability'. In the *I-Ching*, it is said, "change is that which is unchangeable." However, the concept of stability should be understood not as 'inactivity', 'standstill', or 'rest', but as the underlying principle of all change: constancy and regularity.[6] Thus in ceaseless change, there can be found constancy and regularity which constitute a dynamic principle of order guaranteeing all phenomena of change. From this perspective, the universe is not absolute, static or chaotic; but relative, dynamic and well-ordered. It changes, grows and transforms itself according to the law of nature which can be determined and predicated objectively, and even reduced to the simple formulas of number. This is precisely what the *I-Ching* does. Here we are reminded of an explanation of the cosmos similar to that of the Pythagoreans in ancient Greece.[7]

5.12. Negation

The second dialectical idea is the concept of 'negation' which is directly related to the concept of 'change'. For, the very process of change (universal and permanent) is guided by the principle of negation which can be explained in two ways.

First, everything that changes implies its opposite, or better an 'opposite complementarity'. For example, in the *I-Ching*, it is said, "The cold goes and the heat comes; the heat goes and the cold comes", "There is no level place without a bank, and no departure without a return."[8] Or again, "When the sun goes, the moon comes; when the moon goes, the sun comes – the sun and the moon thus take the place of each other."[9] In other words, one of the meanings of the concept of negation involves 'complementary opposition', or 'mutual inclusiveness between opposite things'. This meaning can be best expressed by typically Chinese polar concepts such as 'male and female', 'day and night', 'strong and weak', 'active and inactive', 'hot and cold', 'above and below', 'beauty and ugliness', and above all, '*yin* and *yang*'. In fact, *yin* and *yang* become the primordial polar concepts, the symbols of all polar concepts. For, originally, the word, *yin* (陰) means the absence of sunshine, or shadow and darkness. The word *yang* (陽) means sunshine, or that which pertains to sunshine or light. In later development, *yin* and *yang* came to be regarded as two cosmic forces or principles. The former represents passivity, femininity, darkness, coldness, wetness, softness, etc., and the latter, activity, masculinity, brightness, heat, hardness, etc.. In short, being two primary forces or principles, they are not only not separated from each other, but always interrelated and interacting. As such, *yin* and *yang* are considered in the *I-Ching* as the

two constitutive elements of all things.[10] The same idea is also found in a passage of the *Tao-te ching* (already quoted above) thus:

> Tao produced the One.
> The One produced the two.
> The two produced the three.
> And the three produced the ten thousand things.
> The ten thousand things carry the *yin* and embrace the *yang*, and through the blending of the material force (ch'i) they achieve harmony.[11]

The other connotation of the concept of 'negation' involves the returning or reversion to its opposite, "Reversion is the action of Tao",[12] "(Tao) functioning everywhere means far-reaching. Being far-reaching means returning to the original point."[13] In other words, anything that changes not only implies its opposite (i.e., containing its own opposite), but also reverts from its opposite (i.e., transforming its opposite back to itself). In reality, if anything develops extreme (opposite) qualities, these extremes invariably revert to their opposites. In the *Tao-te ching*, this 'transformation of opposites' is best illustrated in the very notion of Tao as Non-Being/Being simultaneously:

> The Nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth:
> The Named is the mother of all things.
> Therefore let there always be non-being so we may see their subtlety,
> And let there always be being so we may see their outcome.
> The two are the same.[14]

Or again,

> All things in the world come from being.
> And being comes from non-being.[15]

> When the people of the world all know beauty as beauty,
> There arises the recognition of ugliness.
> When they all know the good as good,
> There arises the recognition of evil.
> Therefore:
> Being and non-being produce each other;
> Difficult and easy complete each other;
> Long and short contrast each other;
> High and low distinguish each other;
> Sound and voice harmonize with each other;
> Front and back follow each other.[16]

All of these and other passages illustrate the dialectical movement of Tao, i.e., 'the movement of negation'. Within the context of Tao, all things come from Tao or Non-Being, and will eventually revert to Tao or Non-Being. Thus,

Being is the negation of Non-Being; Non-Being is the negation of Being. Being and Non-Being are not only in opposition but also complementary to each other; that is, they are simultaneously oppositional-complementary, and hence the same.

Here, we see a striking similarity between this idea of reversion or negation in Chinese thought and the Hegelian concept of negation.[17] According to the Hegelian tradition, everything is both being and non-being, both affirmative (of itself) and negative (of what is not itself). In Chinese thought, especially in the *I-Ching* and the *Tao-te ching*, everything contains both *yin* and *yang*; and both *yin* and *yang* are 'negative' in that the former is the negation of the latter; and the latter of the former. But, there is a difference, too. According to Hegel, when a thing is 'mediated', a new thing results, though on a higher level. However, according to Chinese thought, when a thing is 'negated', the new thing repeats the old; or better the old repeats itself.

5.13. Unity

The third dialectical idea is the concept of 'unity', but a unity in terms of 'dynamic whole' or 'harmony of opposites'. This idea of unity is not only one of the earliest philosophical concepts but also central to Chinese thought, especially in its conception of nature or the universe.

From the very beginning, the Chinese have tended to conceive of the universe or nature – in terms of Heaven and Earth – as a unified whole. According to Taoist tradition, Tao is identical with nature (*tzu-jan* 自然), which is both the origin and the destiny of all things.[18] Thus, Tao is eternal, absolute and transcendental, and as such it also serves as the common bond among all existents. This idea is expressed by Chuang-tzu thus: "All things come from the originative process of Nature and return to the originative process of Nature."[19] And, "Although the universe is vast, its transformation is uniform. Although the myriad things are many, their order is one .... Therefore it is virtue that pervades Heaven and Earth, and it is Tao that operates in all things."[20]

Furthermore, the universe (i.e., this unified whole) is not chaotic, but 'orderly' in that it has its own 'natural tendency' or 'natural law'. In the *I-Ching*, one of the earliest classics, two passages are particularly pertinent:

> The sun and moon, realizing in themselves (the course of Heaven), can perpetuate their shining. The four seasons, by their changing and transforming, can perpetuate their production (of things). The sages persevere long in their course, and all under the sky are transformed and perfect. When we look at what they continue doing long, the natural tendencies of heaven, earth and all things can be seen.[21]

Again,

The method of Khien is to change and transform, so that everything obtains its correct nature as appointed (by the mind of Heaven); and (thereafter the conditions of) great harmony are preserved in union. The result is 'what is advantageous, and correct and firm'.[22]

Still another passage states that all actions are nothing but movements "directed" by accordance with natural order."[23] In fact, the *I-Ching* deals precisely with such natural tendencies (i.e., natural laws) of changes, though its formulas, expressed in sixty-four hexagrams, are rather 'primitive'. However, a word of caution against misunderstanding is in order. The *I-Ching* should not be taken literally as a book of divination by which to predict future events in the manner of fortune-telling. Rather it should be understood as the first philosophical attempt (in Chinese thought) to provide a 'rational' explanation of the universe, rational in the sense of expressing natural laws in mathematical formulas.

Moreover, to the Chinese, there exists a harmony between nature and man. This is of course based on the assumption that there is interaction between natural phenomena and human events. This idea is repeatedly expressed in the *I-Ching*:

Heaven and earth exert their influences, and there ensue the transformation and production of all things. The same influence the minds of men, and the result is harmony and peace of all under the sky.[24]

(The trigrams for) heaven and earth in communication together form Thai. The (sage) sovereign, in harmony with this, fashions and completes (his regulations) after the courses of heaven and earth, and assists the application of the adaptations furnished by them – in order to benefit the people.[25]

The great man is he who is in harmony, in his attributes, with heaven and earth; in his brightness, with the sun and moon; in his orderly procedure, with the four seasons; and in his relation to what is fortunate and what is calamitous, in harmony with the spirit-like operations (of Providence).[26]

Similarly, the Yin-yang School also maintains that cyclical change takes place not only in nature, but also in the history of man and human events.[27] Just as the four seasons rotate, so does history. As a matter of fact, changes in society and history are but manifestations of natural forces, i.e., the five elements or powers. Their interaction brings nature and man into a dynamic and well-ordered whole, which is interrelated and interdependent. Consequently, when one part becomes out of phase the other part will be affected,

too. That is why, when the ruler acts immorally, abnormal phenomena appear in the world of nature, which again implies a close connection between the ruler's moral conduct and natural phenomena. This relationship is later known as that of 'the mutual influence between nature and man'.[28]

Finally, in the School of Names or Dialecticians, this concept of unity or dynamic whole is expressed by the concept of 'unity of similarity and difference'. According to Hui Shih (惠施 380–305 B.C.), unity can be explained by two terms: 'the little similarity-and-difference' and 'the great similarity-and-difference'.[29] The former implies that great similarity differs from little similarity; or that similarity in one kind is greater than similarity in another. For example, when we say that all men are animals, we recognize that their similarity in 'being human' is greater than their similarity in 'being animal'. For 'being human' implies 'being animal'; but 'being animal' does not necessarily imply 'being human'. The latter term means that all things are similar in one way and different in another. For example, when we say that all things are 'beings' or 'existents', we recognize that they are similar insofar as they all exist and hence are 'existents' or 'beings'. But at the same time, they are also different in that each of them is a unique individuality and hence are all different 'existents' or 'beings'. Thus, all things, viewed from one perspective, are similar to each other and, viewed from another perspective, are different from each other. Their similarities and differences co-exist in all things.[30] This argument is known in ancient China, as the 'unity of similarity and difference' which can be expressed also as the 'harmony of opposites'.

5.14. Relationality

The fourth philosophical idea which we consider the most dialectical in nature is the concept of 'relationality' or better 'human relationality'. This concept, while discussed by all major philosophical schools in their respective and different ways, is emphasized in Confucianism. Since philosophy, for Confucius, is basically a 'human problem', the questions he raises are: how should men live in society? How should men relate to one another in society? What is the moral code in terms of moral values and virtues that should guide all human relations and hence should be the foundation of society and culture? In short, all these questions seek to discover the full meaning of human relations or 'human relationality', which is nothing but the Confucian insight that man is both a relational and a moral being.

First, man is a relational being, because no one can live alone (physically, psychologically, intellectually – i.e., humanly), but rather he always exists in relation to others in one way or another in society. For example, one is a

father only in relation to his child and vice versa; one is a husband only in relation to his wife and vice versa, and so on. Thus it is understandable that Confucius puts great emphasis on one's relations with others, i.e., one's names, because names reveal not only one's relations in terms of social roles or positions within a concrete context such as family, clan, friendship etc., but also the moral duties and responsibilities entailed by one's relations with others. Among all the numerous relations, there are five fundamental relationships: "between ruler and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brother and those in the intercourse between friends."[31] Furthermore, these five relationships, according to the nature of the relationship, can be grouped into two categories: vertical and horizontal. The former (which consists of the first three) is one of subordination and hence emphasizes obedience. The latter (which consists of the last two) is one of 'equality' because it exists among 'equals' such as brothers and sisters, friends or colleagues. Viewed from this perspective, one's concrete relations with others are either vertical or horizontal relationships, which determine one's names such as 'ruler', 'father', 'friend' and so on, as well as their corresponding moral duties and responsibilities.

Furthermore, being relational, man is also a moral being which involves two dimensions: personal and social. Personally, man should strive to become a 'superior man' (vs. a mean man), superior not in terms of physical strength or intellectual capacity, but in terms of moral excellence, which can be cultivated only by practising all virtues. Among them, the virtue of Jen (仁 which is often translated as 'human heartedness', 'humanity', 'love', 'benevolence', 'kindness' etc.) is the highest. Thus the man of Jen meets the Confucian ideal. In addition, 'being moral' also entails a social dimension, that is, moral excellence should be the very foundation of society. This is, in fact, precisely the central teaching of Confucian political philosophy.

> The ancients who wished to manifest their clear character to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families, would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things. When things are investigated, knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere; when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, the family will be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order; and when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world.[32]

This passage points out clearly how individuals, society and social harmony are intimately related. For, a good society is based on a good government; a good government, on good citizens. A good citizen means a good person; a good person is a moral person, one who practises moral virtues, especially the virtue of Jen. In other words, only morally good persons can become good citizens; only good citizens can form a good government; only a good government can produce social harmony which in turn will provide the social context best suited and necessary for the harmonious development of all human relations, i.e., 'human relationality'.

5.15. The Chung-yung (中庸)

The fifth dialectical idea is the concept of the *chung-yung* or the 'doctrine of the mean' (which is also the name of one of the Four Books).[33] The importance of this concept (and also this Classic Book) lies in the fact that the *chung-yung* has been adopted not only by the Confucian tradition, but also by Taoism and Buddhism. In fact, it has become part of the Chinese way of thinking for scholars and common people alike.

The *chung-yung* is sometimes understood as 'simply doing things halfway or no more than halfway'; which is far from its true meaning. For the Chinese term, *chung* (中), literally means 'center', 'middle', 'equilibrium', or 'the mean'; *yung* (庸) is defined as 'ordinary', 'common', 'usual', 'constant' or 'regularity'. Thus the *chung-yung* can be literally translated as 'the middle road', 'the central way', or 'a common mean', but its full meaning is much richer. Confucius uses the *chung-yung* thus:

> The Superior Man is the state of equilibrium (*chung* 中) and normality (*yung* 庸); the small man is the reverse of these states. The Superior Man exhibits them, because he is the Superior Man, and holds to the timely mean (*chung* 中), and the small man is the opposite of them, because he is the small man, and does anything without taking (morality) into consideration.[34]

In another place, Confucius even considers that the *chung-yung* is the perfect virtue.[35] Mencius further develops the *chung-yung* idea of 'timeliness' or 'timely mean', citing Confucius as a Sage of 'timeliness':

> When it was proper to go into office, then to go into it; when it was proper to remain out of office, then to remain out of it; when it was proper to continue in it long, then to continue in it long; when it was proper to withdraw from it quickly, then to withdraw from it quickly, such was Confucius.[36]

Viewed from this perspective, the *chung-yung* involves two central ideas: one negative and the other positive. The negative idea is that the *chung-yung*

is a doctrine of avoiding any extremes such as too cold or too hot, too bright or too dark. This is based on the assumption that anything to excess, including good things such as eating, drinking or learning, is not good. On the contrary, moderation, a balanced course, or a timely mean in all of our actions are most desirable. That is, everything should be done in a perfect combination of time, place, circumstances, persons involved. In other words, the negative aspect of the *chung-yung* aims at avoiding any extremes in our actions while trying to achieve 'timeliness' – i.e., neither too much nor too little, but 'just right'; or neither too right nor too left, but 'right in the middle'.

The positive idea of the *chung-yung* is 'harmony' which is essential both for the individual and for society. Applied to the individual, the *chung-yung* demands that our emotions and desires be 'blended' so as to achieve an inner emotional harmony. When all of a person's emotions and desires are satisfied and expressed to the proper degree, the person achieves an inner harmony which results in good mental health.[37] Applied to society, when all emotions and desires of the various groups of people who comprise a society are satisfied and expressed to the right degree, the society achieves harmony within itself, resulting in peace and order.[38] This is also true of the whole world of nations.

Two other concepts related to the *chung-yung* – 'relativity' and 'golden mean' – are also worth noting here. The concept of relativity (especially according to the School of Names and the Yin-yang School) is the characteristic of the universe, which is a unified whole, because everything is related to everything else. For example, "The heavens are as low as the earth; mountains are on the same level as marshes".[39] This means that the high is high only in relation to the low; the low is low only in relation to the high. Thus, the high and the low are relative only to each other. There are other similar writings, especially those of Hui Shih, whose ten paradoxes recorded by Chuang-tzu illustrate the relativity of things or events.[40] Thus, from this concept of relativity, two conclusions can be drawn: (1) that the meaning of one thing or event depends on the meaning of the other to the degree they are related, and (2) that the harmony or equilibrium among them (i.e. things or events) is also relative. Furthermore, in order to achieve, and then to maintain, such relative harmony or equilibrium, the 'right way' or the 'proper course' – which is very much part of the central teaching of the *chung-yung* – must be employed.

The other concept is the 'golden mean' which is sometimes known as the 'Confucian golden rule', a doctrine quite similar to the Aristotelian golden mean. The primary goal of the Confucian golden rule is proper relationships or harmony among people. In the *Analects*, the Confucian golden rule is

expressed both negatively and positively. The negative expression appears in the following texts:

Tzu-kung said, "What I do not want others to do to me, I do not want to do to them." Confucius said, "Ah, Tzu! That is beyond you."[41]

Chung-kung asked about humanity. Confucius said, " . . . Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you."[42]

Tzu-kung asked, "Is there one word which can serve as the guiding principle for conduct throughout life?" Confucius said, "It is the word altruism (*shu*). Do not do to others what you do not want them to do to you."[43]

Thus the negative aspect of the Confucian golden rule commands us *not* to do anything to harm others, if we do not want others to do the same harm to us. It is negative because it prohibits us from doing harm. But the Confucian golden rule is not all negative, as often misunderstood. It is also expressed positively thus:

A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent. To be able to judge others by what is near to ourselves may be called the method of realizing humanity.[44]

Confucius said, "The superior man brings the good things of others to completion and does not bring the bad things of others to completion. The inferior man does just the opposite."[45]

Thus the positive aspect of the Confucian golden rule goes a step further than its negative prohibition. It commands us *positively* to do good – which all of us are always eager to do to ourselves – to others. Indeed, it is extremely difficult to practice this positive command. For it is against our natural selfish tendency to treat others exactly as we would treat ourselves, or to help others to complete the good things or projects which they have begun without asking anything in return. But this is precisely what the Confucian golden rule challenges us to strive for: to overcome selfishness and jealousy and to cultivate selfless love for others. If we all practice this maxim, there will result social harmony among all people, which is also one of the primary goals of the *chung-yung*.

5.16. 'Dialectic'

The sixth and last dialectical idea is the concept of 'dialectic' *per se*, provided in two independent sources: the Mohist School and Hsün-tzu (荀子 298–238 B.C.). It is interesting to point out an historical fact – often overlooked

– that from its very beginning, the Mohist School was very much interested in logic, especially dialectic. As a matter of fact, among all philosophical schools, the Mohist was the first and only school to develop a systematic treatment of dialectic as such.[46] According to its teaching, dialectic can be understood in two senses: in the broad sense and in the narrow sense. Understood in the broad sense, dialectic

> seems to make clear and distinguish between right and wrong, to discriminate between good and disordered government, to make evident the points of similarity and difference, examine the principles of names and actualities, differentiate between what is beneficial and what is harmful, and determine what is uncertain. It observes the happening of all things, and investigates the order and relation between the various judgements. It uses names to designate actualities, propositions to express ideas, statements to set forth causes, and taking and giving according to classes.[47]

Thus this passage expresses clearly both the purpose and the methods of dialectic. Its purpose is to make critical judgements of things in six ways: (1) to distinguish between right and wrong, (2) to discriminate between good and disordered government, (3) to make evident the points of similarity and difference, (4) to examine the principles of names and actualities, (5) to differentiate between what is beneficial and what is harmful, and (6) to determine what is uncertain. Its methods comprise primarily two types. The first is the phenomenological method which includes observation of the happening of all things and investigation of the order and relation between the various judgements.[48] The second method is 'logical verification' which is used to determine whether concepts (names) correspond to 'things' (actualities), whether propositions (combinations of two or more names) correctly express one idea, and whether cause-effect relationships are properly understood.[49]

Concerning the last point, seven ways of establishing a statement are described in Minor Illustration as follows:

> What is possible (*huo* 或) is what is not complete. What is hypothetical (*chia* 假) is what is at present not so. Imitation (*hsiao* 效) consists in taking a model (*fa* 法). What is imitated is what is taken for a model. If the cause (*ku* 故) is in agreement with the imitation, it is correct. This is the method of imitation (*hsiao* 效). The method of comparison (*pi* 辟) consists in using one thing to explain another. The method of parallel (*mou* 侔) consists in comparing two propositions (*tz'u* 辞) consistently throughout. The method of analogy (*yüan* 援) says: 'You are so. Why should I alone not be so? In the method of extension (*t'ui* 推), when what has not been accepted is the same as what has been accepted, it is permissible. For example, when it is said that the other is the same, how can I say that it is different?[50]

This compact passage contains seven methods which are all based on logical reasoning, and therefore involve directly or indirectly some sort of 'induction' and 'deduction'. Two of them, however, are particularly obvious: the method of imitation and the method of extension. The former is nothing but a form of deduction.[51] For to take a model is to take a general principle as a standard, and to make an imitation is to experiment with it. If the supposed cause produces the expected result it means that the "cause is in agreement with the imitation"; otherwise, "the cause is not in agreement with the imitation". Thus, the method of imitation is actually a method of proceeding from a general principle to particular cases.

On the other hand, the method of extension is nothing but a form of induction.[52] For to attribute the same to what is not known as to what is known involves a process of induction. For example, to prove the dictum that all men are mortal, one must resort to what is known, that is, all men of the past were mortal. Since men of today and of the future are the same in kind as those of the past, one can conclude that all men are mortal, because one can attribute the same (all men are the same), to what is not known (men of today and of the future), as to what is known (all men of the past were mortal). Thus the method of extension is a method of inducing a general principle from particular cases.

Understood in the narrow sense, however, 'dialectic' has a much more specific meaning, namely, 'conflict' or 'disagreement' which is opposed to or different from 'statement'.[53] To explain their meanings, let us first look at the texts:

Canon I: Statement (*shuo* 說) is that whereby to bring understanding . . . If there is one person who denies, both will deny . . . But dialectic (*pien* 辯) is conflict over something. In dialectic, the one who wins is right.

Exposition I: As to this 'something', if both persons deny that all 'ox-trees' (the name of a tree) are oxen, they will have nothing to argue about. But in dialectic, one says it is an ox, and the other says it is not. This is conflict over something. They cannot both be right, and not being both right, there must be one who is wrong, as, for example, if it were a dog.

Exposition II: Dialectic is that in which one person says a thing is so, and another says it is not so, the one who is right will win.[54]

From these texts it is clear that dialectic in the narrow sense, according to the Mohists, is different from statement, the meaning of which is rather unusual. A case of statement is one of agreement between two parties, whether their opinions are right or wrong. As long as they agree on something – either by

both affirming or both denying it – there is a case of statement because there would be nothing to argue about, though when both say that all 'ox-trees' are oxen they are wrong. On the other hand, dialectic is a case of disagreement, difference of opinion or conflict between two parties; and one is right and the other is wrong. Thus, for example, when one says that a dog is a man and the other says that it is not, then there is dialectic which is a difference of opinion or conflict. The one who says that a dog is not a man wins.[55] In short, dialectic in the narrow sense becomes a case of disagreement or conflict between two parties, and hence it constitutes an argument.

The concept of dialectic per se is also developed by Hsün-tzu. However, Hsün-tzu is generally known for his interpretation of human nature as evil, as opposed to Mencius' interpretation of human nature as good. This, despite his adherence to the main teachings of Confucius, makes him a 'dark horse' among Confucianists. But besides his philosophical zeal, Hsün-tzu is also interested in logic. It is this interest in logic that helps him develop a conception of dialectic per se. For, in discussing human knowledge, he writes,

> Names are that whereby we define various actualities. Propositions (*tz'u* 辞) are the combination of names of different actualities wherewith to discuss one idea. Dialectic and explanation take one actuality and its name under discussion, so as to understand their different aspects. Designation and naming are the object of dialectic. Dialectic and explanation are that whereby the mind delineates the Way (*Tao*).[56]

Elsewhere Hsün-tzu writes:

> When an actuality is not understood, its name is brought forward; when its name is not understood; it is illustrated; when the illustration is not understood, then it is explained; when the explanation is not understood, then dialectic comes into use. Hence the name, illustration, explanation and dialectic are the great refinements of human activity.[57]

Several points are clear from these passages. First of all, dialectic for Hsün-tzu must be understood in its relation to name (which designates actuality), proposition (which, combining more than one name, enunciates one idea), and explanation (which discusses various aspects of an actuality and provides the meaning). When names, propositions and explanations fail to give meaning, then dialectic comes into use. In other words, the procedure by which the mind understands things follows a progression from names to propositions (illustrations) to explanation and finally to dialectic. Thus dialectic (together with explanation) becomes a method of giving meaning to a particular actuality by distinguishing its various aspects.[58]

Secondly, to perform its function well, dialectic must work toward an accord between the name and the actuality which the name designates. In

other words, dialectic is a method of attaining "The Rectification of Names", i.e., an appropriate correspondence between names and actualities. That is why Hsün-tzu says "designation and naming are the object of dialectic."[59]

Thirdly, in its application dialectic involves both a method of 'collection' and a method of 'division', because both are necessary to achieve a proper understanding of any name or proposition and hence an idea. For a method of 'collection' is used in achieving 'generalization'. Hsün-tzu writes, "for although all things are innumerable, there are times we wish to speak of them all in general, so we call them 'things'. 'Thing' is the most general term. We press on and generalize; we generalize and generalize still more, until there is nothing more general. Then only we stop."[60] On the other hand, a method of 'division' is used to arrive at a 'classifying name' (species). Hsün-tzu explains: "There are times when we wish to speak of one aspect so we say 'birds and beasts'. 'Birds and beasts' is the great classifying term. We press on and classify. We classify and classify still more, until there is no more classification to be made, and then we stop."[61] Thus it is by using a method of 'collection' and 'division' that dialectic can properly perform its function of distinguishing various aspects of an actuality, thereby giving a precise understanding or meaning to it.

Finally, it is historically interesting to note Hsün-tzu's claim that by applying 'dialectic' properly, all fallacious statements made by the dialecticians such as "a white horse is not a horse", "to kill robbers is not to kill men" or "mountains and abysses are on the same level", can be discovered and corrected.[62]

Having presented the six dialectical ideas, a synthetic conclusion is in order. It consists of three points in an attempt to confirm the claim made at the beginning of this chapter that Chinese thought as a whole is essentially dialectical. First, in understanding this claim, 'dialectic' should not be understood as a mere 'logical term' as expounded by the Mohist School and Hsün-tzu. However, this does not deny that 'dialectic' is a logical term and as such has its logical meanings as well as its logical usefulness in distinguishing or differentiating things or events. On the contrary, the logical connotation of dialectic is very useful and important in that it constitutes part of the primary meaning of the dialectical nature of Chinese thought, relationality, which leads to the second point.

Then, that Chinese thought as a whole is essentially dialectical, must be understood in terms of 'relationality', a concept that is both comprehensive and dynamic. Comprehensive because it includes all dimensions of existents, natural (i.e., the universe) and human (i.e., man, human relations, society and

history). Dynamic because the very concept of relationality indicates an 'activity of relating or interacting'. This is especially obvious when relationality deals with myriad forms of human relations. In fact, human relations occupy the primary attention of Chinese philosophy throughout history; and in this sense, it is proper to assert that 'human relationality' is the very center of the dialectical nature of Chinese thought.

Finally, the dialectical nature of Chinese thought also implies 'dialectical movement', which involves the concepts or processes discussed above: change, negation, unity, transformation of opposites, the *chung-yung*, relativity and the Confucian golden rule. But what does all this mean concretely? The best way to synthesize these ideas is perhaps to use two primordial Chinese terms: '*yin-yang*' and '*tao*'. *Yin* and *yang* are the two constitutive elements or principles of all existents, but the proportion of *yin* and *yang* differs in each existent. Furthermore, the *yin* and the *yang* are not static but in constant interaction. Their interaction is all important because it is interaction that gives life to an existent because it is responsible for any change (i.e., universal change) and all unity (i.e., Tao). Viewed from this perspective, the concept of relativity can also be understood because the *yin* is the *yin* only in relation to the *yang*, and vice versa. That is, they are relative; and together they produce harmony or balance in terms of either cosmic unity or social order in which human relationships can be harmoniously realized. And the best way to achieve all this (especially social order) is the practice of the *chung-yung* and the Confucian golden rule. After all this is said, it is perhaps understandable why it is so difficult to explain the 'dialectical movement' in any simplified manner, because it is a complex process, entailing so many interacting factors. However, in the light of our discussion above we can now conclude that the dialectical movement can be viewed as the '*yin-yang* movement' always producing Tao: constant change yet constant unity, mutual separating yet mutual relating, always one yet always many. In short, the dialectical movement is a process of reciprocity, mutuality, interactivity, or best 'relationality'.

5.2. A CRITIQUE OF CONTRADICTION AS A PHILOSOPHICAL TERM

Having discussed the dialectical nature of Chinese thought in terms of 'relationality' and the 'yin-yang movement', we are now in a better position to make a critical analysis of Mao's concept of contradiction as a philosophical term. We will compare it first with the Chinese term *mao-tun* (矛盾) and then with the English term "contradiction"; and only then will we offer an

evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses. But let us first summarize the five essential points of Mao's concept of contradiction as expounded in our presentation above:[63]

(a) Contradiction is used by Mao in three different contexts: natural, social, and personal or cognitive.

(b) From these various usages of contradiction emerges its primary meaning: a 'dynamic relationship of interaction' or 'dynamic relationship as such' or simply 'relationship or relationality'.

(c) In addition to its primary meaning, contradiction can be used with three nuances: 'dynamic relationship of interaction' in terms of difference, in terms of a problem or difficulty and in terms of antagonism.

(d) The philosophical meaning of Mao's concept of contradiction involves not only opposition but also complementarity, not only diversity but also unity, not only the part but also the whole, not only struggle but also identity.

(e) Mao's concept of contradiction is not only the key to, but also the very kernel of, Mao's theory of dialectic. If we had to use one word to explain Mao's theory of dialectic, it would be 'contradiction', namely, 'Contradiction is Reality' or 'Reality is Contradiction'.

From all these five points, we can say at the outset that Mao has given a unique but rich and dynamic content to contradiction as a philosophical term. This assessment will be illustrated by the following three considerations.

5.21. Comparison with the Chinese Term Mao-tun

The first is to compare Mao's concept of contradiction with the Chinese term *mao-tun* (矛盾). Mao's concept of contradiction is not exactly the same as the literal meaning of the Chinese term which, as explained previously, means 'mutually opposed' or 'logically incompatible'. Since 'mutually opposed' or 'logically incompatible' refers only to 'opposition', it is only one of the many meanings of Mao's concept of contradiction.

However, while not exactly matching the literal meaning of *mao-tun*, the content of Mao's concept is very much part of Chinese thought which is essentially dialectical, as explained above. This is obvious because the primary meaning of Mao's concept of contradiction is 'dynamic relationship of interaction' or 'dynamic relationship as such' or simply 'relationship' which is in near perfect coincidence with the dialectical nature of Chinese thought, i.e.,

'relationality'. Furthermore, the fact that Mao's concept of contradiction involves not only the part but also the whole, is but another expression of the 'dialectical movement' of Chinese thought, that is, the '*yin-yang* movement'. Viewed from this perspective, Mao's concept of contradiction can be considered as a '*relational term*' whose full meaning comprises not only the literal meaning of *mao-tun*, i.e., opposition, but also all connotations of 'relationality' and the '*yin-yang* movement' with reference to producing a harmonious Tao.

Furthermore, being a relational term, Mao's concept of contradiction consists of two distinct and inseparable elements: opposition and complementarity. Opposition is easy to understand, since Mao's concept of contradiction is nothing but a 'dynamic relationship of interaction' which always involves a 'relationship of opposition' resulting from various constitutive elements that are constantly interacting. As a result of such interaction, opposition can be antagonistic or non-antagonistic.[64] In Mao's own terminology, the former is expressed by 'dynamic relationship of interaction' in terms of 'antagonism', such as contradictions between the Chinese people and Japanese imperialism in the 1930s and 1940s, or between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The nature of this kind of opposition is antagonistic in the sense that it cannot be resolved within itself, or by peaceful means. Rather, since it involves a life-and-death struggle, it must be resolved by open revolution or violent means. On the other hand, non-antagonistic opposition is expressed by the 'dynamic relationship of interaction' in terms of difference or a problem, or a difficulty which is *generally* non-antagonistic in nature (though it can become antagonistic if not properly handled).[65] In this case, the nature of this kind of opposition is non-antagonistic in the sense that it can be resolved within itself, or by peaceful means. Viewed from this perspective, opposition – either antagonistic or non-antagonistic – as implied in Mao's concept of contradiction, is the same as the literal meaning of the Chinese term. It is also similar to the usages of contradiction found in Aristotelian logic, Hegelian philosophy and the Marxist tradition (all of which we will discuss later), and especially, of course, the last, which puts great emphasis on social contradiction.

The second constitutive element of Mao's concept of contradiction is complementarity. This point, however, is difficult to explain; for what we must make clear is that Mao's concept of contradiction *itself* entails the notion of complementarity, that is, it involves not only opposition, but at the same time, complementarity. Since Mao's notion of complementarity is contained in his concept of contradiction, we must begin with the latter.

According to Mao, contradiction – or the dynamic relationship of interaction – is nothing but a dynamic unity or whole which depends both on the opposition within the interaction of various elements and on their interdependence or interrelatedness. Without either opposition or interdependence there would be no dynamic unity or whole, that is, contradiction. Thus Mao's very concept of contradiction involves necessarily and simultaneously the ideas of opposition and interdependence which can be considered as complementarity.[66] Viewed from this perspective, Mao's notion of complementarity is different from any synthesis of thesis and antithesis or from the new unity resulting from the process of sublation or mediation, because the latter two are the results of an external process while the former is contained in Mao's very concept of contradiction.

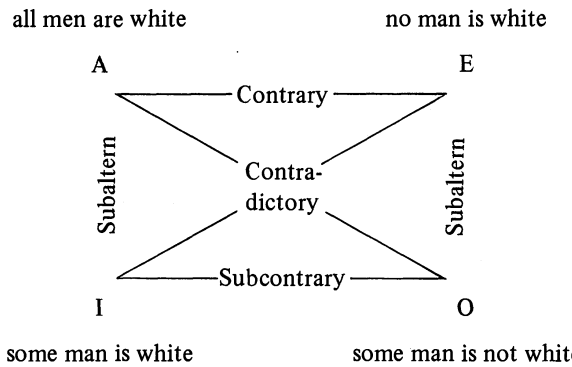
Here it is interesting to note that Mao's notion of complementarity can best be illustrated by the mutual relationship of the *yin* and the *yang* which are present in any existent. For the relationship between the *yin* and the *yang* is always a dynamic unity constituted by both their opposition and their complementarity.[67] That is, the very dynamic unity of any existent is the result of their *interrelated interaction*; while interaction indicates their opposition, interrelated reveals their complementarity. In other words, without opposition there is no complementarity; without complementarity there is no opposition. Together they constitute a dynamic unity or whole of any existent, though both opposition and complementarity can be distinguished, at least 'epistemologically'.[68]

5.22. Comparison with the English Term 'Contradiction'

The second consideration consists in comparing Mao's concept of contradiction with three philosophical usages of the English term, contradiction, in Western philosophy: a 'logical' usage, an 'ontological' usage and a 'social' usage. First, in Aristotelian logic, contradiction is used as a logical term, as part of methodology. For Aristotle makes a distinction between science (i.e., philosophy) and dialectic, and therefore between demonstration and dialectic.[69] Science or philosophy aims directly at truth; and its proper method is demonstration or demonstrative reasoning which necessarily begins with true and certain premises. In other words, in demonstration, we start from true premises and inevitably arrive at a true conclusion and hence we have 'proof'.[70] On the other hand, dialectic does not directly concern truth; rather it is the art of reasoning accurately from a given premise that may or may not be true. Thus, dialectical reasoning is said to proceed from premises which are probable or which are based upon the common opinion of some

distinguished persons. Consequently, it is possible to reason dialectically from premises which are believed to be false, and to carry out this process to show the absurd conclusions to which they lead.[71] Or one may reason dialectically from premises which one assumes tentatively, to see what kinds of conclusions one is committed to if he adopts them. In either case, his object is not directly to secure truth, but only to secure consistency in the reasoning process. Furthermore, since premises are 'probable' or 'plausible', there is no need for the conclusion to be necessarily true. Thus dialectic for Aristotle is tentative, problematic and experiential, and as such, it is a valid method, a method of 'logic of probability'.

Furthermore, being a logical term, contradiction can also be explained in the context of the Square of Opposition:[72]



The Square of Opposition reveals four types of relationships of opposition between any two propositions that differ in quantity, quality, or both. All are relevant to our discussion. The first is, of course, *contradictory opposition* existing between two propositions which differ in quantity and quality, for example, 'all men are white' – 'some man is not white'. These two propositions are contradictory in the sense that they are mutually exclusive. That is, the truth of one proposition negates that of the other and vice versa. Thus any joint assertion of these two propositions will result in a 'contradiction'. That is why Aristotle says "a contradiction is an opposition which of its own nature excludes a middle. The part of a contradiction which conjoins a predicate with a subject is an affirmation; the part disjoining them is a negation."[73] Thus it is impossible for a contradictory pair to be true of the same thing at the same time. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that it is

in this sense of contradiction that the law of non-contradiction is formed and should be understood.

The second relationship is *contrary opposition* between two universal propositions which differ only in quality, for example, 'all men are white' – 'no man is white'.[74] These two propositions cannot be both true but can both be false; for example, it can happen that only 'some men are white'.

The third relationship is *subcontrary opposition* existing between two particular propositions which differ only in quality, for example, 'some man is white' – 'some man is not white'.[75] These two propositions can be both true, but cannot be both false. If one is false the other is true; but not vice versa.

The fourth relationship is *subaltern opposition* between two propositions which differ only in quantity, for example, 'all men are white' – 'some man is white', or 'no man is white' – 'some man is not white'.[76] In this case, if the universal proposition is true, the particular is true, but not vice versa; if the particular proposition is false the universal is also false, but not vice versa.

From these four relationships of opposition it is clear that as a logical term, 'contradiction' used in Aristotelian logic refers essentially to the mutual exclusiveness, or logical incompatibility of two contradictory propositions. Thus the meaning of contradiction as a logical term is the same as that of its literal meaning, which is in turn also similar to one of the many meanings of Mao's concept of contradiction.

The second philosophical usage of the term 'contradiction' in Western thought is made by Hegel. Contradiction for Hegel is no longer a logical term that reveals logical incompatibility or mutual exclusiveness of two propositions, but rather it becomes an ontological term that refers to a 'dynamic moment' of any existent in its dialectic process of negativity as expressed in terms of both being and non-being or A and Non-A.[77]

However, such a usage of contradiction must be properly understood within Hegel's overall view of dialectic: both as an ontological structure of reality and a philosophical method. First, Hegel's dialectic reveals the ontological structure of reality as a dynamic-rational-whole or totality. Reality is dynamic in that it is not a static entity, but a process of self-development of the Absolute Spirit. The process consists of various moments or phases of development. Each moment contains the truth appropriate to that moment, although always leading to a higher moment of development. Reality is also rational; as Hegel expresses it, "what is rational is actual and what is actual is rational."[78] For the dynamic process of the self-development of the Absolute Spirit does not drift according to blind forces but is guided by the law of

'negativity' or 'mediation', toward ever fuller development. Finally, reality is the whole or totality. Since the Absolute Spirit constitutes the only reality, its full development alone is completely real. The parts (i.e., all finite existents) which comprise it possess a greater or lesser degree of reality, i.e., truth only as related to the Absolute Spirit. Thus the Absolute Spirit is the source and origin of knowledge, truth and rationality. In other words, for Hegel, the Absolute Spirit constitutes all of reality whose very structure is dialectical insofar as it is a dynamic and negative process of rationality.[79] Furthermore, this very process follows the law of negativity or mediation which makes the full development of the Absolute Spirit possible. It is from this perspective that we can say Hegel's dialectic reveals the ontological structure of reality – the full development of the Absolute Spirit concretely in the world.

Hegel's dialectic is also a philosophical method. Since philosophy is the science of unfolding reality, which is dialectically structured, its proper method is necessarily the dialectic. As a matter of fact, Hegel asserts that dialectic is the only proper method of scientific inquiry, i.e., philosophy. In the introduction to *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel says that dialectic is nothing but the reflective process of our thinking, its continuous self-reflection upon its prior performances.[80] As such, dialectic becomes a mode of thought as it tries to obtain the knowledge or truth of reality. Furthermore, dialectic follows a process of negativity or mediation, or a triadic pattern of 'immediate', 'mediate', and 'mediated immediate' which brings previous elements together in harmony and thereby provides another starting point for a new process, though on a higher level. In other words, dialectic entails the self-overcoming of any finite knowledge or truth that is partial, incomplete and one-sided. It involves the passing of concepts into their opposites and the achievement of a higher unity. In short, dialectic is the proper method of arriving at an ever-higher truth through contradictions or oppositions.

Placed in this context, contradiction for Hegel is not purely negative. Rather than mere opposition, it is also something positive: a dynamic moment of co-existence of being and non-being, that is, of qualities which an existent possesses and non-qualities which an existent does not possess.[81] Viewed as such, contradiction is, and constitutes, a *moment*, both positive and dynamic, of *negativity* that makes the whole dialectical process possible. In other words, contradiction for Hegel becomes a sublation or mediation between the old and the new.

At this juncture it is interesting to point out that while the total systems of Hegel and Mao are entirely different, Mao's concept of contradiction has a 'Hegelian touch' in two senses. First, Mao views contradiction as essentially a

process, in terms of either a thing, a natural phenomenon or a social event, consisting of both internal and external relationships of interaction. Such a view of contradiction is similar to that of Hegel, namely, contradiction is a dynamic moment of the dialectical process of negativity. Secondly, Mao's concept of contradiction also involves a process of mediation or sublation – a point that is central not only to Hegel's notion of contradiction or dialectic but also to his entire system. Mao's view is best illuminated by his use of contradiction in the personal or cognitive context. For, according to Mao, cognition or the process of human knowledge (which is a form of contradiction) moves in endless or continuous cycles; each cycle advances knowledge a step further and so makes it more and more profound. To summarize his main point at the end of 'On Practice', Mao writes:

> Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level.[82]

Like Hegel, Mao affirms that any moment of human knowledge contains its own truth appropriate only to that moment and that it will be mediated or sublated to a higher level of knowledge, through a process of practice-knowledge-practice.

The third philosophical usage of the term "contradiction" is developed by Marx and his followers. At once reacting to and modifying Hegel's notion of dialectic, Marx views dialectic as essentially a philosophical method that reveals the dialectical structure of society's historical development in the form of class struggle and social revolution. However, while rejecting Hegel's idealism, Marx accepts almost all the rest of his dialectic. Marx agrees with Hegel's fundamental understanding of the *negative* characteristic of reality in that it is full of contradictions or oppositions. Yet, there is a definite difference between Hegel's and Marx's dialectic. For Hegel, dialectic is the totality of the Absolute Spirit or Reason. For Marx, dialectic is the totality of material forces, both social and historical. That is, Marx's dialectic is grounded in concrete social conditions, especially its economic structure, associated with a particular historical epoch of society.[83] Because of this material base, Marx's dialectic is distinguished by two predominant characteristics.

The first is that Marx's dialectic has a societal dimension. For Marx, society is not an abstract concept, nor is it merely an aggregate of individuals who

happen to come together through some sort of 'social contract'. Rather, society is a natural community of people engaged in the process of material production. Thus the process of material production is the driving force in society which constitutes also the material base of Marx's dialectic.[84] In other words, one of the functions of Marx's dialectic is to study society as conditioned or determined by its mode of material production which consists of 'forces of production' and 'relations of production', a mode of production which in turn entails a 'division of labor' and 'class struggle'.

The second characteristic of Marx's dialectic is its historical dimension. For besides having a societal dimension, society is also historical in that it always exists in a concrete historical context, apart from which it loses all meaning. Thus, Marx's dialectic also deals with the historical development of society. Marx concludes that society passes through four historical stages or epochs of development – primitive (Asiatic), ancient, feudal and modern bourgeois – characterized by their respective modes of production or economic formations.[85] However, Marx considers the last three epochs as class society and thus only as preludes to the true history of Communism. Only with the emergence of Communist society does the true history of mankind begin. In other words, human history is divided into two parts: the pre-history of class society and the history of classless society. Furthermore, the transition of society from one epoch to another follows the dialectical law of inner contradiction in the forms of class struggle and social revolution. Thus Marx's dialectic is designed precisely to discover this dialectical law of inner contradiction, to reveal the historical development of society in concrete socio-historical conditions. Through dialectic it is shown that the new society is always based on the material conditions of the old society. Only when the material conditions of the old society 'mature' can the old society be transformed.[86]

Thus it is clear that Marx's dialectic becomes the proper method of philosophy whose aim is not to contemplate but to change reality. Furthermore, Marx's view of dialectic is broadened and developed by Engels. While Engels accepts Marx's basic view of dialectic, he develops a systematic theory of materialist dialectic, consisting of both objective dialectic and subjective dialectic. Objective dialectic prevails throughout nature or natural processes. In his *Dialectic of Nature*, Engels demonstrates that all natural processes occur according to the three laws of dialectic: (1) the law of transition from quantity to quality and vice versa, (2) the law of mutual interpenetration of opposites, and (3) the law of the negation of negation. Thus Engels seems to have linked dialectic with natural sciences. On the other hand, subjective

dialectic (i.e., dialectical thought) is only the reflection of the oppositions which exist everywhere in objective reality. This is also the origin of the so-called copy-theory of knowledge (later developed by Lenin). In short, Engels considers that dialectic and its three laws are true of all sciences, both natural and social. From this perspective, dialectic becomes a systematic theory, both an ontology and an epistemology.[87]

However, both Marx's and Engels' views of dialectic undergo another transformation in terms of praxis through Lenin, and to a lesser degree, Stalin, though as far as the theory of dialectic is concerned, neither breaks any new ground. In the light of his *Philosophical Notebook* (entitled *On the Question of Dialectic*), it is clear that Lenin accepts the three basic laws of dialectic formulated by Engels. Because of the political urgency of his time, however, Lenin conceives of dialectic essentially as a practical method to achieve his revolutionary goals, and therefore places great emphasis on concrete analysis of objective reality. Stalin also emphasizes practicality or praxis for the same purpose of achieving political goals. In other words, in the hands of Lenin and Stalin, the term 'dialectic' acquires a practical orientation, that is, to achieve revolutionary purpose through class struggle and social revolution.[88] Thus, in the Marxist tradition, contradiction, a main form of dialectic, can be considered as a social, or better, a 'socio-politico-historical' term that reveals opposition or antagonism in society and history.

In relating the Marxist view of contradiction, we cannot but notice that in terms of contradiction, Mao is a genuine Marxist. This can be seen from the fact that, converted to Marxism at an early age, Mao is influenced greatly by Marxist philosophy as a whole (through Lenin and Stalin, especially the former), and especially by its dialectic as a 'socio-politico-historical' term with its focus on antagonism. That is why, among all three contexts, Mao puts great emphasis on contradiction as used in the social context. Among all contradictions, Mao views social contradictions as primary, and views them also in terms of class struggle and social revolution – which harks back to the Marxist tradition. Furthermore, Mao is also committed not only to discovering social contradictions but also to resolving them accordingly: 'to discover in order to resolve'.[89] Such commitment to 'praxis' is the direct application of Marx's belief (and of Mao's, too) that philosophy is meant not to contemplate the world but to change it.

But to say that Mao's concept of contradiction is influenced by Marxist philosophy and especially dialectic does not tell the whole story. The above discussion of the dialectical nature of Chinese thought clearly shows that Mao's concept of contradiction – as well as his theory of dialectic – is

essentially Chinese,' and as such is shaped by many Chinese sources, a point which will be further discussed in the next section.[90]

5.23. Evaluation

The third consideration consists in pointing out both the strengths and weaknesses of Mao's concept of contradiction as a philosophical term. The entire strength of Mao's concept of contradiction lies in its two distinctive characteristics: dynamism and comprehensiveness. The dynamic nature of Mao's concept of contradiction is almost self-evident, and this for two reasons. First, the very notion of Mao's concept of contradiction reveals its dynamic nature. As our exposition shows above, contradiction for Mao is nothing but a 'dynamic relationship of interaction' or 'dynamic relationship as such' or 'relationship'. Such an understanding of contradiction excludes any static or fixed content; rather, its implies a flexible and living content. That is, Mao's concept of contradiction, as a relational term, always focuses on 'activity', or better on the 'act of relating' or the 'act of interacting'. Secondly, the dynamic nature of Mao's concept of contradiction is manifested in its practical usefulness. Since reality (consisting of natural phenomena, things and human events) is constantly changing, multi-faceted and complex, Mao's concept of contradiction proves to be the right (philosophical) concept that can aptly and effectively capture all fabrics of ever-dynamic reality. In other words, being a relational term, Mao's concept of contradiction can, when used properly, discover all the complexities of relations, both natural and human, and resolve any problems or difficulties resulting therefrom. In this sense, the dynamic nature of Mao's concept of contradiction also entails a practical consequence, i.e., 'praxis'.

The other distinctive characteristic of Mao's concept of contradiction is its comprehensive scope of application. As explained in our presentation, Mao's concept of contradiction can be used in three different contexts: natural, social and personal or cognitive. That is, it can be used to study practically all natural phenomena, social events and cognitive processes (i.e., knowledge). Because of such a comprehensive range of application, Mao's concept of contradiction becomes not only the key to, but also the very kernel of Mao's theory of dialectic which in turn constitutes his overall perspective on both subjective and objective reality, that is, his '*world-view*'. In other words, like 'justice' for Plato, 'reason' for Kant or 'consciousness' for Hegel, 'contradiction' for Mao becomes the primary term which gives meaning to all other terms – such as 'class struggle', 'social revolution', or 'cultural revolution' – and becomes the focal point of Mao's entire philosophy.[91]

This point becomes even more significant in the social context. For while it is true that Mao's concept of contradiction can be used in all three different contexts, it is the social context which brings out the full significance of Mao's concept of contradiction in terms of effectiveness and appropriateness. For example, the myriad social changes in China in the 1930's and 1940's were complex and confusing, because many forces or groups were fighting not only among themselves but against each other. In studying them, Mao's concept of contradiction proves to be highly effective and appropriate because by using it, he was able to discover different kinds of contradictions in different relationships. Depending on whether these contradictions were antagonistic or non-antagonistic, he could resolve them accordingly.[92] In other words, Mao's concept of contradiction can serve as a reference point from which to understand and sort out complex situations or events, and thereby put them into a unified perspective.

Just as no philosophical term is perfect, so Mao's concept of contradiction has two weaknesses of its own. The first stems from its almost 'universal application' which is in turn a side-effect of its dynamic nature. This is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, its very dynamic nature makes Mao's concept of contradiction capable of being applied to almost all natural phenomena, social events and cognitive processes, but on the other hand, such universal applicability makes Mao's concept of contradiction less effective or appropriate in some cases. That is, when used in all three different contexts, the effectiveness and appropriateness of Mao's concept of contradiction is not the same, but 'hierarchical' in the order of the social context, the cognitive context and the natural context. In other words, when Mao's concept of contradiction is used to study events (contradictions) and cognitive processes (to a lesser extent), it proves to be an excellent philosophical term. But when used to study natural phenomena its effectiveness and appropriateness are greatly reduced. For example, when Mao's concept of contradiction is used to refer to natural phenomena – in terms of either biological growth such as that of plants or animals, or of scientific activities such as electricity or chemical reactions – its primary meaning of dynamic relationship of interaction still applies but its application does seem forced.[93] The reason seems to be that Mao's knowledge of dialectic is essentially that of Engels (who puts great emphasis on nature) rather than of Marx,[94] because Mao acquired his knowledge of Marxism, especially of dialectic, through the interpretations of Lenin and Stalin. As a result, he includes nature as one of its contexts almost as an afterthought.

The second weakness of Mao's concept of contradiction is the lack of

objective criteria in its concrete application. As we explained above, Mao's concept of contradiction is so dynamic in nature and so comprehensive in scope that it is extremely difficult to apply, and even more so to master. Furthermore, in applying Mao's concept of contradiction – even to the same situation or event – different people may arrive at different or even opposing conclusions. Of course, such a conflict of opinions may not necessarily be caused by the term itself, that is, Mao's concept of contradiction (for there are many other factors) but its dynamic nature and its comprehensive scope surely do nothing to help prevent it.[95] In other words, in its concrete application, Mao's concept of contradiction is easy to interpret 'subjectively', in the sense that each person tends to interpret a situation or an event according to one's own background and perspective. Thus when a conflict of opinion does arise, there is no objective criterion to guide the concrete application of Mao's concept of contradiction. In fact, Mao's concept of contradiction itself becomes a difficulty or contradiction which must be resolved.

These are the three considerations of Mao's concept of contradiction. The first shows that Mao's concept of contradiction is a relational term and hence is essentially Chinese, especially as understood in terms of the *yin-yang* movement which produces a dynamic unity, i.e., Tao. This point is of great importance in helping us to evaluate his theory of dialectic in the next chapter. The second consideration shows that Mao's concept of contradiction as a 'relationship' or 'relationality' can be used as a logical, ontological or socio-historical term, similar to those usages in Western philosophy. Here it is interesting to note that Mao's concept of contradiction bears a much closer resemblance to the views of Hegel and Marx, especially the latter. Finally, as a philosophical term, contradiction becomes the primary term of Mao's theory of dialectic and hence of his entire thought. It provides him with a Chinese-Marxist 'world-view', with emphasis on 'human relationality' and 'social and cultural revolution', by which he understands and changes reality (i.e., China) accordingly. But like all primary terms such as 'justice', 'reason' or 'charity', Mao's concept of contradiction seems to be too general in its concrete application – a weakness inherent in the very notion of the primary term which in this case is contradiction.

CHAPTER 6

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF MAO'S THEORY OF DIALECTIC

In this last chapter, we shall undertake a critique of Mao's theory of dialectic as a whole. As our presentation showed, Mao's theory of dialectic is *dialectically* structured both in form and in content. As to its form, it begins by affirming the universality of contradiction, then it affirms the particularity of contradiction, and concludes with the dialectic (i.e., transformationality) of contradiction. In content, universality, particularity and dialectic all deal with contradiction, though each from its own perspective. That is, universality reveals the general and comprehensive scope of contradiction which can be expressed in terms of "Reality-as-Contradiction" or "Contradiction-as-Reality". Particularity reveals the unique characteristic of contradiction which can be expressed in terms of principal or non-principal 'distinction' or 'specificity'. Dialectic reveals the dynamic nature and development of contradiction. Viewed from this perspective, universality, particularity and dialectic constitute the three 'moments' of contradiction, and hence also of Mao's theory of dialectic, which are not mutually exclusive but complementary. In this context, our philosophical analysis begins with the first moment, universality, and moves to the second and third moments, particularity and dialectic, and concludes with a concrete example of dialectic, i.e., the dialectical development of Mao's thought itself.

6.1. Universality

First of all, we must point out that "Reality-as-Contradiction" or "Contradiction-as-Reality" is not only a concise formulation of the universality of contradiction; it is also the very essence of Mao's theory of dialectic. However, such a precise formulation, if judged superficially or in isolation, invites misunderstanding. Yet, it is precisely this concise formulation which contains one of Mao's greatest contributions, as can be illustrated by its synthetic nature, that is, by a threefold dimensional synthesis of reality.

The first dimension of "Reality-as-Contradiction" reveals an 'ontological structure' of reality, or more accurately of 'objective reality' (that is, reality considered objectively). In other words, the ontological structure of reality is that contradictions exist in all things: natural phenomena, social events and thought, on the one hand, and, on the other, contradictions exist within each

thing or event in the course of its development from beginning to end. In Mao's own words, "The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradictions exist in the process of all things; and the other is that in the process of the development of each thing, a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end."[1] Furthermore, viewed from this perspective, the nature of the ontological structure of reality is both complex and dynamic. Complex, because it is full of countless contradictions which, as Mao shows, exist in all natural phenomena, social events and thought. Dynamic, because it consists of countless 'dynamic relationships of interactions' – which are nothing but contradictions – both among the complex process of several contradictions and within the simple process of a single contradiction. Thus, nothing in reality is static or isolated; everything exists in relation to other things. In short, the ontological structure of reality can be expressed as dialectical.

The second dimension of "Reality-as-Contradiction" reveals an epistemological structure of reality, or more accurately, of subjective reality or thought. Since thought or knowledge, according to Mao who apparently accepts Lenin's copy-theory of knowledge,[2] is the reflection of reality, its structure of course corresponds to that of reality itself, namely of objective reality. In other words, the epistemological structure of thought is also *dialectical* in the sense that it is full of contradictions, because it truly reflects each and every contradiction that exists in objective reality. Just as objective reality is both complex and dynamic, so thought is both complex and dynamic. Complex, because it reflects both simple and complex processes of contradictions; dynamic, because its reflection is derived from dynamic processes of contradictions, all of which are interacting. Furthermore, the epistemological structure of thought is dialectical in still another sense. By its very nature, thought or knowledge is cumulative in that it is acquired through a gradual yet progressive process, because it can always be increased both in scope and in depth.[3] Thus to know is to discover the ontological structure of reality (in terms of "Reality-as-Contradiction"); hence knowledge is the reflection of Reality-as-Contradiction. In other words, the epistemological structure of thought is the reflection of the ontological structure of reality. "Thought-as-Contradiction" is "Contradiction-as-Thought".

The third dimension of "Reality-as-Contradiction" reveals a 'praxiological structure' of reality, in the sense that it reveals both the interdependence of and the interaction between objective reality and subjective reality. Being a man of action (i.e., a revolutionary), Mao is not concerned with 'pure subjectivity' or with mere 'reality out there'; nor is he interested in 'pure

subjectivity' or 'theory as such' or 'theory for the sake of theory'. The main purpose of his theory of dialectic is praxiological; he seeks to change or 'revolutionize' reality. But in order to change it, one must first understand reality as it is, that is, one must have an epistemological understanding of the ontological structure of reality. With this purpose, Mao consciously moves from thought-to-reality, back to reality-to-thought, and again to thought-to-reality. That is why he always tries to understand the concrete situation, to find concrete problems and to arrive at concrete solutions. All of this involves praxis, which is a dynamic relationship between theory and practice. In order to achieve this, moreover, Mao proposes his synthetic praxis as the most effective method, which consists of 'whole-part-whole', 'objective-subjective-objective', 'past-present-future' and 'practice-theory-practice' movements. As such, Mao's synthetic praxis is not merely a method, but also a constitutive element of his theory of dialectic.[4]

The multifaceted nature of Mao's theory of dialectic makes it extremely difficult – if not impossible – to categorize into any one of the philosophical terms of Western philosophy such as ontology, epistemology or ethics, although the content of Mao's theory of dialectic is related to them all. For ontology or metaphysics deals with "the science of being considered as such".[5] It is true that Mao's theory of dialectic does not deal with Being as such; but it does involve an ontological structure of reality in that it reveals the objective structure of reality, especially its objective contradictions in society and in history.

Mao's theory of dialectic is also related to epistemology which deals with the theory of knowledge. Mao's theory of dialectic presupposes his theory of knowledge which is essentially the copy-theory of knowledge in the Marxist, or better, Leninist sense. Mao's theory of dialectic is similar to the Western conception of ethics, which provides normative principles for man's actions. In this case, the similarity lies in the fact that Mao's theory of dialectic does provide theoretical principles as well as practical methods to guide man's actions, especially his social actions. For Mao's theory of dialectic is centered on his notion of praxis, a continuous process of carrying out practice-theory-practice, aimed at resolving contradictions. But, on the other hand, as explained above, Mao's theory of dialectic can be confined neither to the realm of knowledge nor to the realm of ethics alone; it transcends them both. Then what is Mao's theory of dialectic? Into which of the Western philosophical categories can it be placed?

The answer is that Mao's theory of dialectic does not fit into any simple category or term in Western philosophy, though in content it is related to

those of ontology, epistemology and ethics. However, in the light of the above discussion, we can conclude that Mao's theory of dialectic is his '*world-view*' which is *both a theory and a method*, and hence contains a theoretical dimension and a practical dimension.[6] As a theory, it provides a special perspective to gain a theoretical knowledge of the ontological structure of objective reality, and a praxiological structure of both objective and subjective reality. As a method, Mao's theory of dialectic provides an effective means, or a 'synthetic praxis', by which to acquire theoretical knowledge on the one hand, and on the other, change reality accordingly. Viewed from this perspective, Mao's theory of dialectic is the unity of theory and practice, the combination of theoretical knowledge of "Reality-as-Contradiction" and the practical means of changing it.[7]

6.2. Particularity

Our second analysis concerns the 'particularity' of contradiction, the second 'moment' of Mao's theory of dialectic. Here we see how the transition from the first 'moment' of dialectic, i.e., the universality of contradiction, to the second 'moment' of dialectic, i.e., the particularity of contradiction, takes place, which in turn reveals Mao's realistic grasp of the practicality of praxis.[8] For Mao realizes that while the universality of contradiction by its very nature is general and abstract, any contradiction in reality is concrete and definite, unique and complex. Thus, to know and resolve any contradiction in reality, knowledge of the universality of contradiction itself is inadequate; it demands knowledge of its particularity. In other words, the second moment of dialectic, the particularity of contradiction, is dictated by the very nature of the first moment of dialectic, the universality of contradiction. Through this transition, the universality of contradiction is 'mediated' by the particularity of contradiction; and is thus raised to a higher level of dialectical process.[9] In studying this transition, we have noticed two significant points: Mao's philosophical concept of the particularity of contradiction, and an effective application of synthetic praxis.

From having dealt with concrete contradictions in reality within China, Mao develops a philosophical concept of the particularity of contradiction, which is of paramount importance in knowing and resolving any concrete contradiction (which is indeed the main purpose of Mao's theory of the dialectic). But what is the particularity of contradiction? For Mao, the particularity of contradiction refers to concrete and unique characteristics of a thing or contradiction; it is that which makes a thing or contradiction unique and distinguishes it from other things or contradictions. In traditional terms,

the particularity of contradiction is nothing but the essence or nature of a thing or contradiction.[10] Therefore, in dealing with any contradiction in reality, according to Mao, one must know the particularity or essence of that contradiction. One must determine what is essential and what is non-essential or accidental. The essence of a contradiction is that which plays the decisive and principal role; that which is non-essential plays secondary and non-principal roles in the contradiction in question.

However, Mao's philosophical concept of the particularity of contradiction would not be so significant, if he merely defined the particularity of contradiction as its essence or nature. But he goes a step further. Since contradiction can be a simple process of a single contradiction, or a complex process of several contradictions, he further explains what the particularity is in both cases. The particularity of a complex process of several contradictions is *the principal contradiction*, because the very nature of this complex process of several contradictions is determined primarily by its principal contradiction, and the way in which this principal contradiction influences non-principal (or secondary and subordinate) contradictions. Similarly, the particularity of a simple process of a single contradiction is the principal contradictory aspect, because the very nature of this simple process of a single contradiction is determined primarily by its principal contradictory aspect and the way in which this principal contradictory aspect influences non-principal contradictory aspects. Furthermore, a contradiction, either a simple process or a complex process, may be long and may consist of various stages of development. In that case, Mao points out, to know the particularity of that contradiction is to discover the principal and non-principal contradictions or contradictory aspects of each stage of that long process. Mao's philosophical concept of the particularity of contradiction, either simple or complex, can thus serve as a guiding principle in knowing and resolving any contradictions in reality.

We must point out here that while emphasizing the importance of the particularity of contradiction, namely, what is essential, Mao does not imply that one can neglect what is non-essential or accidental. But he does mean that in dealing with any concrete contradiction, special attention must be given to its particularity. For unless one can grasp the particularity of a contradiction, or essential characteristics, one cannot have a proper understanding of that contradiction, let alone resolve it.[11]

Finally, it is interesting to note that although what Mao says about the particularity of contradiction sounds abstract and complicated, upon reflection it all seems to fit into our natural approach to solving any problem,

especially a complex one. When faced with a problem we must first try to understand the central issues involved – or in Mao's terminology, what the principal and non-principal contradictions or contradictory aspects are. From this perspective, we can say that Mao's philosophical concept of the particularity of contradiction (in terms of the principal and non-principal contradictions or contradictory aspects) is founded on the sound and practical wisdom of problem-solving.

Another significant point we have noted is that in studying the particularity of contradiction, Mao's synthetic praxis proves highly useful and effective.[12] This seems to be obvious. Since each and every contradiction is concrete and definite, unique and complex, it is extremely difficult to know its particularity; furthermore, the ever-changing existential conditions of any concrete contradiction makes this task even harder. To meet this challenge, Mao proposes the synthetic praxis whose essence is flexibility (which, as explained above, is guaranteed by its four threefold movements: objective-subjective-objective, whole-part-whole, practice-theory-practice, and past-present-future) as a method which is both appropriate and effective. For, the objective-subjective-objective movement stresses the concreteness and uniqueness of a contradiction; the practice-theory-practice movement emphasizes the practical aspect of that contradiction; the past-present-future movement focuses on the development of that contradiction; and the whole-part-whole movement centers on the totality of that contradiction. By using these four threefold movements dialectically,[13] one is likely to be able to make a sound analysis of the existential conditions of that contradiction, to discover what is essential and what is not. In other words, by an effective and appropriate application of the four threefold movements, one can better understand the particularity of that contradiction. Thus the usefulness and effectiveness of Mao's synthetic praxis is shown by studying the particularity of contradiction.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that while engaged in studying the particularity of contradiction, Mao does not forget the dialectical relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction. For, he says, "since the particular is united with the universal, and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection with the object itself."[14] With such an understanding, Mao is convinced that in acquiring the knowledge of the particularity a twofold procedure is necessary: from the particular to the general, and from the

general to the particular.[15] This twofold procedure is also in accordance with the dialectical movement of man's knowledge, that is, a general growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the knowledge of things in general, and vice versa. On this point, Mao rightly insists on a dialectical relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction, because the former reveals the general and universal nature of a contradiction, while the latter reveals the unique and concrete characteristics of this or that contradiction, i.e., its essence. In other words, universality provides a general context or perspective in which particularity unfolds the concrete and existential content of that contradiction. Thus, without universality, particularity lacks a proper context or perspective; without particularity, universality remains general and abstract without a concrete content. In either case taken alone, no contradiction can be properly understood and less so resolved.

6.3. Dialectic

Our third analysis concerns the dialectic of contradiction, the third moment of Mao's theory of dialectic. It consists of the most fundamental laws or principles – relativity, absoluteness and transformationality – which guide the development of any contradiction. However, the great significance of the dialectic of contradiction does not lie in Mao's creation of new concepts or terms. In fact, the only two terms which are original[16] with Mao are 'relative rest' and 'conspicuous change' which indicate quantitative change and qualitative change, respectively. All of the important terms such as 'the unity of opposites', 'the struggle of opposites', 'relativity', or 'absoluteness', are already established in the Marxist vocabulary. The great significance of the dialectic of contradiction seems rather to lie in the fact that not only does Mao arrive at a twofold nature of contradiction: relative (the unity of opposites) and absolute (the struggle of opposites), and grasp the fundamental principle of transformationality which guides the development of any contradiction, he also expresses them in a dialectical form of relativity, absoluteness and transformationality. In other words, the dialectic of contradiction constitutes the very soul of Mao's theory of dialectic, namely *'dynamic flexibility'*, and thus makes it – if used properly – not a closed system but an ever-open process of interaction in terms of relativity, absoluteness and transformationality.[17] It is interesting to note how neatly all this is tied together.

For, according to Mao, contradiction is relative in its dynamic relationship of interaction among contradictory aspects. This can also be expressed as the *'unity of opposites'*. Since any contradiction is concrete and exists under certain given conditions (which are never static but ever-changing), the

dynamic unity of opposites cannot be static, unchanging or absolute either. When the given conditions change, the dynamic unity of opposites will change accordingly. In other words, the dynamic unity of opposites is conditional, because it depends on the relative stability of all given conditions as well as their interaction. Thus, Mao rightly says that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative.[18] Viewed from this perspective, the relativity of contradiction for Mao reveals the *relative stability of the dynamic unity of opposites* which further depends on its given conditions and their interaction, i.e., *conditionality*, or *relativity-as-conditionality*. That is why Mao strongly maintains that no one with a dogmatic or fixed perspective (including that of Marxism)[19] can truly understand concrete contradiction, because such a dogmatic person would miss the importance of conditionality as well as the relativity of contradiction.

However, relativity is only one of two constitutive aspects of contradiction, and hence cannot exhaust the full meaning of the development of contradiction. The other constitutive aspect of contradiction is its absoluteness with respect to the struggle of opposites. For, while being relatively stable, contradiction undergoes constant change, because its existential conditionality changes constantly. As explained above, the change may take a form of 'relative rest' (quantitative change) or a form of 'conspicuous change' (qualitative change). But in either case, the given conditions of any contradiction will undergo a process of constant change, that is, a struggle of opposites; and so does contradiction. In other words, in the light of the 'conditionality' of the relativity of contradiction, Mao perceives an absolute character of contradiction which reveals that contradiction undergoes constant change, either in the form of relative rest or of conspicuous change. Viewed from this perspective, relativity and absoluteness are not opposite but complementary; both are constitutive aspects of contradiction in its existential conditionality. For, as far as its dynamic unity of opposites is concerned, contradiction is relatively stable (with relation to its conditionality). As far as its changing conditionality is concerned, contradiction is absolute in the sense that it undergoes constant change as the struggle of opposites. Here we must point out that all of this, if properly understood, is in perfect accordance with Mao's conception of contradiction as 'a dynamic relationship of interaction as such'. If contradiction is essentially a relationship,[20] Mao is then right in using the terms 'relativity' and 'absoluteness' to explain the dynamic flexibility of contradiction.

However, neither relativity nor absoluteness explains how contradiction changes. This task is fulfilled by the principle of 'transformationality'. The

principle of transformationality, according to Mao, is the most universal and fundamental principle guiding any dialectical movement, because it explains how contradiction is transformed, either quantitatively or qualitatively. But all of this depends on 'conditionality'.[21] That is, if the change of conditionality of contradiction takes the form of 'relative rest' (quantitative change), the unity of opposites (relativity) will change but remain essentially as it is, because no transformationality has taken place with regard to the relationship between the principal and non-principal contradictory aspects or contradictions. On the other hand, if the change of conditionality of contradiction takes the form of 'conspicuous change' (qualitative change), the unity of opposites (the old relativity) will not remain the same, but will undergo a radical change, resulting in a new unity of opposites (a new relativity), because a transformationality will take place in the relationship between the principal and non-principal contradictory aspects or contradictions. In other words, the principal and non-principal contradictory aspects (of a simple process of a single contradiction), as well as the principal and non-principal contradictions (of a complex process of several contradictions) can be *transformed*, under certain circumstances, that is, if there is a conspicuous change (qualitative change) of conditionality. When that happens, the principal contradictory aspects or contradictions can be transformed into non-principal contradictory aspects or contradictions and vice versa. All of this obviously depends on the result of changes in given conditions in any concrete case.

In short, Mao is convinced that the principle of transformationality is the most universal and most fundamental principle of dialectic. For it illustrates how 'relativity', 'absoluteness', 'conditionality', 'relative rest' (quantitative change), 'conspicuous change' (qualitative change), 'principal contradictory aspect or contradiction', and 'non-principal contradictory aspect or contradiction' are all dynamically interrelated. As such, it also reveals the dynamic flexibility of contradiction, and hence constantly guides the development of all contradictions, under all circumstances. Because of his deep conviction, Mao is very original in his analysis of many important practical issues.[22] Two of them – (1) the relationship between the economic basis and the superstructure, and (2) the existence of contradictions in socialist countries – are worth mentioning here because of their significant impact upon the development of the Marxist tradition.

The first concerns the fundamental Marxist relationship between the economic base and the superstructure. According to the orthodox interpretation,[23] this relationship is essentially one of dependence, subordination or determination. That is, the economic structure of society constitutes the

basis or foundation on which its superstructure lies.[24] 'Economic base' and 'superstructure' are both 'Marxist' terms. The former refers to the economic structure of society which is based on men's productive relations as determined (under capitalism) by the private ownership of the means of production. The latter refers to many other kinds of social relations, ideas or institutions – political, legal, philosophical, religious, etc. In other words, the mode of production of society (which consists of productive forces and productive relations of that society) determines all aspects of social life. All of this can be expressed by 'social being determining social consciousness' or 'the economic base determining the superstructure'.[25]

Being or claiming to be a Marxist, Mao of course subscribes to this fundamental tenet of Marxism, because as he says, "Whoever denies this is not a materialist."[26] However, convinced of the universality of the fundamental principle of transformationality, Mao refuses to hold – moreover, he resists – any dogmatic or mechanistic interpretation of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure. For the dogmatic or mechanistic interpretation holds that the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure is *absolute* and unchangeable. The economic base is always the determining factor while the superstructure is always the determined factor.[27] But Mao's view is much more dynamic and flexible. On the one hand, he affirms that *in general* the superstructure is determined by the economic base; and, on the other, he maintains that this relationship between the economic base and the superstructure is *not absolute*, but relative to its conditionality. That is, under certain conditions, the economic base, rather than the superstructure, might assume a role of dependence – being determined by the superstructure. In other words, according to Mao, the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure *must also be guided by the principle of transformationality* which further depends on its *conditionality*.[28] When the given conditions (i.e., conditionality) change, the economic base and the superstructure, as well as their respective roles, will be transformed. The superstructure thus assumes the determining role and hence becomes the principal contradictory aspect, while the economic base plays the determined role and hence becomes the non-principal contradictory aspect. To illustrate this point, Mao cites an historical event during the Sino-Japanese War.[29] Because of the extraordinary circumstance that China's survival was at stake, anti-imperialist armies (i.e., an institution) and their corresponding policies (i.e., ideas) – both of which belong to the superstructure – were the determining factors and hence became the principal contradictory aspects, while the economic base played a supportive role and hence became the

non-principal contradictory aspect.[30] In this particular case (and in others), according to Mao, the normal relationship of dependence, subordination or determination between the economic base and the superstructure was transformed.

All this shows that Mao is not burdened by any dogmatic or mechanistic interpretation of Marxism, including one of its most fundamental relationships, that between the economic base and the superstructure. He is confident and flexible in applying the principle of transformationality to any concrete contradiction or practical issue and thus seems able to strike a balance between the economic base and the superstructure, though perhaps with due emphasis on the former. Mao makes this point clear when he says, "in the general development of history, the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness,"[31] but at the same time, he also recognizes the importance of "the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being, and of the superstructure on the economic base."[32]

The second significant issue in which Mao's interpretation differed from that of the orthodox Marxist[33] concerns the existence of contradiction in socialist (and eventually Communist) society. According to the orthodox Marxist position, in socialist society, there is no contradiction, especially no antagonistic contradiction. The reason is that contradiction is primarily caused by class-exploitation, i.e., exploitation of some classes by others, which is in turn caused by the existence of private ownership of the means of production. However, socialist society, where private ownership of the means of production is abolished in favor of public (or state) ownership, gives rise to a new socialist economic structure. By eliminating the private ownership of the means of production, socialist society eliminates exploitation of some classes by others, and hence ends contradiction. Of course, in socialist society there is still class distinction between the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia; but the nature of such class distinctions is radically different from that under capitalism. That is, socialist classification is of a non-antagonistic nature, and as a result, there are no contradictions, especially nonantagonistic ones.

Again, by using the principle of transformationality, Mao's interpretation of the question of the existence of contradiction in socialist society shows both flexibility and originality. He seems to affirm three things: (1) the existence of contradictions, both antagonistic and non-antagonistic, in socialist (and even Communist) society, (2) that contradictions in socialist society are also guided by the principle of transformationality from antagonistic to

non-antagonistic and vice versa, and (3) that different contradictions, antagonistic or non-antagonistic, must be handled correctly but differently.

First, Mao affirms that in socialist society contradictions, including antagonistic ones, do exist.[34] This for him is almost self-evident. For, with his understanding of contradiction as 'a dynamic relationship of interaction' – in terms of difference, a problem and a difficulty, or an antagonism – it is natural for Mao to assert the existence of contradictions in socialist society. By eliminating the private ownership of the means of production, socialist society has eliminated only one of the fundamental causes of exploitation of some classes by others. There is still class distinction. Different classes, such as the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia, still exist. In addition, in social reconstruction, there inevitably arise differences, problems and difficulties, antagonism or conflicts of interests, which will constitute various dynamic relationships of interaction, and hence contradictions.[35] In other words, Mao refutes the dogmatic or mechanistic interpretation that by eliminating the private ownership of the means of production, all contradictions would be *automatically* eliminated.[36] However, he does admit that most contradictions in a socialist society are non-antagonistic in nature, though he insists that some antagonistic contradictions can develop. Examples of such antagonistic contradictions, Mao would say, are those of the Hungarian riot of 1956 or those in China during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1968.

Secondly, Mao maintains that contradictions in socialist society are also guided by the principle of transformationality. That is, antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions can, under certain conditions, be transformed into each other. "Under certain conditions", as explained above, means that the change of conditionality takes a form of conspicuous change (qualitative change). Then, the non-antagonistic contradictions can be transformed into antagonistic ones and vice versa. This possibility of transformationality between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions in socialist society has great practical consequences.[37] For, even though most contradictions in socialist society are non-antagonistic, it may happen that if not handled correctly, they can be transformed into antagonistic ones, which are extremely difficult to resolve. The Cultural Revolution in China, in Mao's opinion, can be considered as a classic example of such a transformation of non-antagonistic contradictions into antagonistic ones.

Thirdly, since antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions not only exist in socialist society, but also can be transformed into each other, Mao states in his essay 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the

People' that it is imperative to handle different contradictions correctly but differently. If so, non-antagonistic contradictions which do not contain irreconcilable conflicts will not lead to open antagonism or violent struggle. As such, they must be resolved *peacefully*; and the most effective means is that of 'uniting-criticizing-uniting'.[38] The purpose is to achieve unity; but to achieve unity one must make use of the means of 'criticizing'. Thus, through the movement of 'uniting-criticizing-uniting', non-antagonistic contradictions can be resolved correctly.[39]

But, on the other hand, antagonistic contradictions which contain irreconcilable conflicts will lead to open antagonism and eventually develop into revolution. As such, they must be resolved by violent means, by open struggle or revolution, resulting in the eventual dissolution of that antagonistic contradiction. It is perhaps in this context that Mao's concept of 'permanent revolution' can best be understood.[40] For, according to Mao, revolution, as a violent means to resolve antagonistic contradiction,[41] is necessary not only now but also in the future: in socialist (and even Communist) society, revolution is 'permanent'. But why? As explained above, even though most contradictions in socialist society are non-antagonistic it may happen that some are not handled correctly, and are thereby transformed into antagonistic ones. When that happens, revolution is necessary to resolve them. From this perspective, the theoretical basis of permanent revolution seems to be derived from the possibility of transformationality of antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions.[42] Since this possibility, according to Mao, will always exist in socialist and even Communist society, then there is a permanent need for revolution. Mao's conviction seems to have stemmed from his personal experience in the social reconstruction in China, which demonstrated beyond a doubt that non-antagonistic contradictions could, and indeed did, develop into antagonistic contradictions and were resolved only by a Cultural Revolution of great magnitude, including both the Party and the government, the leaders and the masses, the civilians and the Army.[43] In short, the process of 'permanent revolution' is demanded by Mao's fundamental insight, "Reality-as-Contradiction" or "Contradiction-as-Reality".

6.4. A Related Question

In this last section of our philosophical analysis, we shall discuss a concrete example of Mao's theory of dialectic, i.e., the dialectical development of Mao's thought itself in terms of the 'Chinese-ness' and the 'Marxism-ness'. To put it in another way: are Mao and his theory of dialectic essentially Chinese

or essentially Marxist? Or as some would phrase it: what percentage of Marxist or Chinese elements does Mao's thought contain?

Since our answer to this question is based on an implicit premise,[44] let us begin with it. It is our firm belief that the general development of the human mind (or thought) does not proceed 'quantitatively' or 'dissipatedly'. The human mind or thought is not like a storehouse; it does not develop merely by acquiring more and more facts, information and data only to be stored in a scattered or disorganized manner in the brain. Rather the human mind grows 'qualitatively' and 'synthetically'. As soon as the human mind acquires new facts, information and data, it synthesizes them – by absorbing them, digesting them and making them its own. Furthermore, this synthesizing power – which serves the functions of co-ordinating, relating and reasoning – seems to be necessary for the normal development of a person, because the lack of it often is a sign of non-development, underdevelopment or abnormal development.

In light of our understanding of how the human mind develops in general, we can now discuss the question of whether Mao (in terms of his theory of dialectic or thought) is 'Marxist' or 'Chinese'; and in this connection, we shall discuss two points. First, we have noticed that as far as the sources which influenced the development of Mao's Thought are concerned, they can be divided into two main groups: Marxist and Chinese. The former consists of general and basic ideas of Marx and Engels – without much detail – as transmitted by the Soviet writings of Lenin and Stalin;[45] while the latter consists of Mao's early studies of the Chinese classics, literature, history and his general knowledge of Chinese thought and culture.[46] While there is no disagreement among scholars about these two main sources, it is extremely difficult to determine precisely the role of each throughout Mao's life. Rather than attempting any mathematical or quantitative calculation, we shall try to understand, from an historical perspective, the interplay of these two main sources upon the development of Mao's thought at different stages of his life, which is the second point of our discussion.

From an historical perspective, the dialectical development of Mao's thought was conditioned by his life in the context of China's revolution; and it can be divided into four major phases. The first phase covered mainly his early years of formal education, from 1900 to 1918. As a young boy from a relatively comfortable family, Mao had the opportunity to receive a primary and secondary education based on the traditional classics as well as special training at the Normal School.[47] As a result, he had learned many Chinese classics at an early age; and later in the Normal School, he expanded his

knowledge, not only in the traditional classics, literature, and history, but also in Western thought, though the latter did not amount to much. In short, during the first phase, Mao's thought was formed mainly by Chinese traditional thought (the Chinese classics, literature and history) as well as by *his reaction against it*, and to a lesser extent by a brief introduction to Western thought.[48] In other words, during this period, Mao's world-view was not fully formed. Even if it were, it was perhaps oriented toward 'national liberation' based on the progressive modernization of Chinese traditional thought – a view which so many liberal scholars and young men of that time shared. It must be pointed out, however, that during the later years of his formal education, Mao was already politically oriented; and that was perhaps why he went to Peking to seek some means to '*save*' China (which he eventually found), though he did not dream of it, nor did he know how, then!

The second phase covered a period of almost 20 years, from 1918 to 1935. During this period, Mao's thought underwent a radical change through his conversion to Marxism. Because of his political consciousness of China as a nation, because of his contact with early Chinese Communist leaders (Li Ta-chao and Ch'en Tu-hsiu) in Peking, Mao had the opportunity to begin to study Marxism, though what he learned at that time was rudimentary. That was so for two reasons. The first was that, turning into a professional revolutionary, Mao had little time to devote to the formal study of Marxism.[49] Secondly, during this period very little Marxist literature was translated into Chinese and the few translations all contained the Soviet interpretation of Marxism through Lenin and Stalin, and especially the latter.[50] Despite all of these concrete circumstances, Mao did acquire a general knowledge of the basics of Marxism, especially those tenets which were very useful in organizing the Chinese revolution, such as 'class struggle', 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', 'the Party', etc. As a result, Mao's world-view gradually became 'Marxist' *as he understood it*. That is, Mao's world-view contained some general principles of Marxism without his having a thorough understanding of all of the specific and detailed teachings of Marxism. However, one word of clarification is in order here.

During this period, since Mao was only a young revolutionary, not playing a leading role in the Chinese Communist Party, his world-view was not yet fully formed; it was still in its formative stage and was not yet enriched by his later revolutionary experience. But it was being developed in the general direction of the newly-learned Marxism added to his general background in Chinese thought and culture. Under such circumstances, how much his early classical education influenced him, on the one hand, and on the other, how

much the newly-learned Marxism influenced him, is hard to determine. Any such attempt would be mere speculation. The most we can say is perhaps that because of the urgency of joining in revolution, Mao's world-view was probably dominated by the new revolutionary ideology, namely the basic Marxist ideas as transmitted from Soviet sources.[51]

The third phase began in 1935 when Mao assumed the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and extended to 1949 when the People's Republic of China was formally established. With the benefit of historical hindsight, we can now see clearly that during this period Mao's world-view was conditioned, shaped and enriched by concrete political events in China. After many years of revolutionary experience in the Chinese Communist Party, both successes and failures (especially the latter), Mao's supreme authority was finally recognized in January 1935 at the Tsunji Conference.[52] At that time, historical exigency demanded (more than ever, because of the Long March) Mao's correct handling of China's revolution which was a fierce life-and-death struggle. As a result, he had to perform this function of leadership, not only in theory but also in practice. Therefore, Mao learned more about Marxism (through more Chinese translations of Marxist works and with more time) on the one hand, and on the other, he began to form his own world-view, that is, his theory of dialectic by drawing upon his knowledge of Chinese classics, literature and history as well. Furthermore, the concrete context of the Chinese revolution demanded practical and realistic solutions to concrete problems.[53] As a result of all of this, Mao's world-view was beginning to take the shape of what was essentially expressed in his essays 'On Contradiction' and 'On Practice' and many other writings in the Yenan period. It seems clear from our representation above that, as far as its terminology is concerned, Mao's theory of dialectic is more 'Marxist' than 'Chinese', because many of its important terms are Marxist – such as 'dialectic', 'historical materialism', 'the relativity of the unity of opposites', 'the absoluteness of the struggle of opposites', etc. However, as far as its content is concerned, Mao's theory of dialectic is *both Chinese and Marxist*, though perhaps with more emphasis on the former – a point which needs clarification.

The above discussion of the development of Mao's thought, plus our study of the development of 'dialectical ideas' in Chinese philosophy (in the fifth chapter) suggest clearly that as far as the content of dialectic is concerned, Mao could have been influenced by both sources, because both Western and Chinese philosophy had developed 'dialectic' or 'dialectical ideas' independently of each other. However, the fact that Mao had relatively less knowledge of Marxism (and this only through the Soviet interpretation) and still less

knowledge of the history of Western philosophy, on the one hand, and, on the other, that first he knew much more (relatively, of course) about Chinese philosophy, literature and history (one of whose dominant ideas was 'dialectic'), seems to suggest that Mao's basic understanding of the theory of dialectic as to its content was *probably* influenced more by Chinese thought. This seems even more likely if we recall Mao's key concept of 'contradiction' as a 'dynamic relationship of interaction as such', and the fundamental insight of his theory of dialectic, "Reality-as-Contradiction" or "Contradiction-as-Reality". For, the concept of the 'dynamic relationship of interaction' and the idea that all of reality is a dynamic relationship, were precisely among the basic ideas of Chinese philosophy as a whole, though they were not explicit in all major philosophical schools.[54] Furthermore, in his writings, especially 'On Contradiction' and 'On Practice', Mao made so many references to classical writings and to Chinese literature and history, that it was quite evident that he was influenced by his early classical training, though he himself, or his followers for that matter, would perhaps not like to admit it.[55]

However, to say that the content of Mao's theory of dialectic was influenced by Chinese philosophy, literature and history much more than Mao (and his followers) would like to admit, does not deny that he was also influenced by Soviet Marxism. For both the terminology and the content show clearly that Mao's theory of dialectic was patterned according to his understanding of Marxism – which was not thorough in detail but correct in principle. This specifically Chinese influence may have saved Mao from becoming a dogmatic or mechanistic Marxist, because many detailed explanations of Marx and Engels by the Soviet interpreters were precisely dogmatic or rigid. Indeed, many of Mao's interpretations of important issues seem to be much closer to the original ideas of Marx and Engels than the Soviet interpretation – e.g., his interpretation of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure; or of the existence of contradictions in socialist (and even Communist) society.[56] In short, during this phase (from 1935 to 1949), Mao had fully developed his own theory of dialectic, which was based both on his understanding of Marxism and on his rich knowledge of Chinese philosophy, literature and history.

The fourth and final phase of Mao's life (and world-view) covered a period of almost thirty years, from 1949 to 1976. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Mao, as the undisputed 'leader of leaders',[57] had a different task – to rebuild a ruined country and to manage a modern China. But with the final triumph of the Chinese revolution, Mao then had the confidence to meet the new challenge. However, as far as his world-view or

theory of dialectic is concerned, it remained essentially the same, with no major theoretical changes or developments, though his personal experience in handling socialist reconstruction did confirm and therefore refine his own theory of dialectic, especially the principle of transformationality. As a result, Mao was better able to explain and resolve contradictions in socialist society; and by so doing, he could make an original contribution to Marxism.[58] All of this shows that during this period, Mao gradually and surely became a 'grand master' in his own theory of dialectic. In other words, while he publicly maintained his adherence to Marxism, Mao began to resist and eventually to refute, in many instances, the Soviet interpretation of Marxism. He began to assert his own interpretations of all major events in China and of some major international events – which was demonstrated by the breaking up of the friendship between China and Russia in 1960,[59] as well as by the Cultural Revolution of China from 1966 to 1968.[60] In short, during this period, by concrete application of his own theory, Mao made his theory of dialectic more and more *Sinicized*, while public pronouncement of adherence to the general direction of Marxism (but not the Soviet interpretation of it, now) was maintained. This situation prevailed throughout Mao's life and continues after his death in 1976.[61]

From what has been said, several points become clear. First, like the human mind (or thought), Mao's world-view or theory of dialectic cannot, and should not, be reduced to, and thereby explained by, a quantitative calculation of what percentage of each element – Marxist or Chinese – is contained in Mao's Thought. Secondly, it is clear that *both Marxism* (as Mao understood it through the Soviet interpretation) *and his rich knowledge of the Chinese classics, literature and history* influenced his theory of dialectic. Thirdly, from an historical perspective, we have found that Mao's theory of dialectic was formed and developed *dialectically* with different emphases during different phases of its development (which were in turn conditioned by the major political events in China). In general, however, we can conclude that Mao's theory of dialectic germinated with his early education in the Chinese classics, literature and history; acquired a 'materialist' tinge via Marxism (as transmitted through the Soviet writings); underwent a gradual transformation or modification through the test of concrete revolution in China; and finally took root in the new soil of socialist China based on new values derived from both Marxist and Chinese traditions. Throughout each of these phases, Mao's theory of dialectic was developed dialectically; each phase or moment was 'mediated' and raised to a higher level, while retaining the truth of its previous phase or moment. Thus, we can say that Mao's world-view

or theory of dialectic is both Marxist and Chinese with different emphases on the former or on the latter at different phases of its development and application, though it was increasingly 'Sinicized' through praxis in the mature years of Mao's life – a point which seems to summarize perfectly our philosophical analysis of Mao's theory of dialectic.

CONCLUSION

After a long and sometimes difficult process of reflective synthesis, we have finally reached the end of our intellectual inquiry. Since throughout the course of our study, Mao's theory of dialectic has been analyzed, synthesized, reconstructed, presented and evaluated in a systematic manner, we do not see the need for a customary conclusion to summarize what has been discussed. Instead, we shall end our inquiry by reflecting on Mao's status as a 'philosopher'. Our reflection will focus first on Mao's 'philosophical' (or better 'non-philosophical') status according to Western standards, and then on Mao's philosophical status according to Chinese standards.

First, the common view in the West seems to be that Mao cannot be considered as a philosopher *per se*; or at best he is a second or third-rate philosopher. Or rather, he is only a revolutionary whose writings, because of his political eminence, have been widely studied. The rationale of such a view appears to be that Mao's writings (including his four essays on philosopy) do not meet the standards of Western philosophy. But what are these standards of Western philosophy? While there is no single definition of 'philosophy' or 'philosopher' and hence of the standards of Western philosophy upon which all Western scholars can agree, we do notice some common characteristics of Western philosophy, and two in particular. The first seems to be 'love of wisdom' which is also the literal meaning of *philosophia*. For philosophical inquiry consists of two constitutive elements: (1) 'love' – as a desire to know (for the sake of learning) and (2) 'wisdom' – as a mature life-experience resulting from a long process of knowing. In other words, motivated by 'love of wisdom', a philosopher is one who seeks to understand the universe, man, God, or any combination of all this, in a deeper and more reflective way – an inquiry which is often expressed in philosophical terminology as seeking the 'ultimate causes of all beings or things' or the 'ultimate explanation of all reality'.

The other characteristic of Western philosophy is 'systematization' or the tendency to clarify and analyze. As for its form (of expression), Western philosophy is often expressed in systematic treatises developed according to logical reasoning. That is why there have been so many systematic treatises of philosophy or philosophical subjects – often quite long – such as the

Republic of Plato, the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, the *Summa* of Aquinas, the *Critique of Pure Reason* of Kant, the *Phenomenology* of Hegel, to mention but a few. Such a tendency toward systematization is also shown by the fact that Western philosophy in the medieval era (especially after Aquinas and later in Scholasticism) has been divided into six branches: metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, (rational) psychology, cosmology and natural theology.[1]

Viewed from these two characteristics, it is justifiable to assert that Mao cannot be considered as a philosopher *per se*, because as far as their content is concerned, Mao's writings (not motivated and written for the sake of pure learning) do not fit into any one category of Western philosophy; as far as their form of expression is concerned, his writings lack the systematic style based on long argumentation, logical explanation and step-by-step reasoning.

However, a different picture emerges when Mao's writings are evaluated in the context of Chinese philosophy. For as far as its content is concerned, Chinese philosophy focuses almost exclusively on man, especially in terms of 'humanism' with a social and practical orientation, while other subjects concerning nature and God are discussed either very rarely or not at all. For example, while 'cosmology' as understood in Western philosophy has been studied by some philosophical schools in China, it has certainly not been emphasized; 'natural theology' as understood in Western philosophy had scarcely been discussed in Chinese philosophy. As far as its form of expression is concerned, Chinese philosophy takes the form of proverbs, sayings or conversations, which result simply from one's personal life-experience. That is perhaps why Chinese philosophical writings do not contain long, systematic and rational discussions comparable to those in Western philosophy.[2] That is also perhaps why philosophy is not separate from life or does not remain a purely speculative discipline. On the contrary, philosophy and life are always intimately interwined. In other words, a philosopher in China is expected to practice his own philosophy; and no one can become a 'recognized philosopher' unless one practices one's philosophical teachings. All of this gives rise to the long tradition of the unity of theory and practice.[3] In the light of such an understanding of Chinese philosophy, our evaluation of the question – whether Mao can be considered as a philosopher *per se* – is put into a new context.

Still, in answering this question, a simplistic either-or or yes-no answer would seem to be inadequate. We must again make a distinction. For, traditionally, Chinese philosophers (except for the masters of the Classical period such as Confucius, Lao-tzu and others) have given only commentaries on certain Classics.[4] As such, Chinese philosophers (ever since the Classical

period) have seldom been original thinkers. In this traditional sense, therefore, Mao cannot be 'qualified' as a 'Chinese philosopher', because he did not comment on the Classics at all, though he made some use of philosophical ideas or phrases taken from them. On the contrary, his general attitude toward Confucius, Lao-tzu and the Classics as a whole, was critical, to say the least.[5]

But if we use the standards of Chinese philosophy in general, we can say that Mao can be considered as a 'philosopher' *per se*, because the content of Mao's writings center on nothing but man and humanism (in terms of man and his relationship with others in society). The purpose of his writings and especially his theory of dialectic, is to change society and improve the livelihood of the people by changing society's structure. However, in order to understand and change the complex reality of China during the first half of the twentieth century, Mao realized that both theory and practice were important but with emphasis on the latter. Therefore, it is understandable that Mao's writings always had a political overtone or orientation. But this should not be taken as denying Mao's philosophical insights into man, society and history, and hence his status as a philosopher; especially if we remember that philosophy and life have traditionally been interwined, and that, in Chinese philosophy, there has been no rigid form of expression of one's philosophical insights. To that extent, Mao's many writings meet the standard of Chinese philosophy in general, and therefore he should be rightly considered as a philosopher *per se*.[6]

But, after all this has been said, we wonder if this often-debated question is really as important as it appears, especially in the context of Mao's view of himself. As he told Edgar Snow, he wanted to be remembered, above all, not as "Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, Great Helmsman", but as "Great Teacher",[7] which again says it all: 'teacher as philosopher' or 'philosopher as teacher'. His answer is so meaningful, so dynamic, so revealing in the context of Chinese philosophy and culture, as well as quite relevant to the question under discussion.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

[1] There are, of course, many reasons for this state of affairs; but they can be grouped into two kinds: subjective and objective. The subjective reasons come mainly from one's political stance, personal belief or personal prejudices. For example, the 'nationalist man' can hardly understand Mao and his thought because he who has had historical, political, or even personal prejudices, has adopted a fundamental position of antagonism, against (Communist) China and especially her leader, Mao. Therefore, whatever the nationalist man says and writes would be colored – even if only subconsciously – by his fundamental position of antagonism. Nor can the 'Soviet man' understand Mao and his thought, because his attitude, especially after 1960, has been 'fossilized' into the official Soviet policy of anti-Maoism. Furthermore, the 'Chinese Communist man' thinks that he understands Mao and his thought; but in fact, it is perhaps more accurate to say that he respects, obeys or even adores – rather than understands – Mao and his thought, because historical developments beyond anybody's control have elevated Mao's authority and prestige to a 'super-human' level.

On the other hand, the objective reasons stem mainly from objective difficulties caused either by the Chinese language itself, by different thought patterns, or by Mao's own writing style. As a result, people of different social, political, historical and above all cultural backgrounds, or who are not familiar with Mao's writing style, might find it extremely difficult to understand Mao and his thought. For example, the 'capitalist man' (or 'Western man') often misunderstands Mao and his thought, because his approach, as conditioned by a background entirely different from that of China, tends to be academic and abstract. He tends to try to fit Mao and his thought into Western categories and thereby to treat him and China as an 'object' of intellectual discussion or political decision. Similarly, the 'ordinary man' can hardly comprehend Mao and his thought, because he is not trained in Marxism or in any philosophical analysis. Thus when faced with Mao's vast writings – some of which are simple; others, complicated; and still others, 'contradictory' – the ordinary man often becomes confused, not knowing how to appreciate or condemn them, to say nothing of making a critical evaluation. This explains the confusion of many Western political groups who want to be considered "Maoist".

[2] Although the essential ideas of Mao's theory of dialectic are contained mostly in his four essays on philosophy (i.e., 'On Practice', 'On Contradiction', 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People' and 'Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?'), he did not formulate a systematic and unified theory of dialectic as understood in Western philosophy.

[3] Cf. pp. 74–79, 134–136 of this work; and J. M. Bocheński, *The Methods of Contemporary Thought*, New York, Harper & Row, 1965, *passim* and especially pp. 2–14.

[4] The rise of Behaviorism in psychology originated with John B. Watson. In his book, *Behaviorism* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1925), pp. 3–18, Watson boldly proposed that psychology should concentrate on studying behavior rather than consciousness. Ever since Watson, the emphasis on human behavior (especially on external, observable behavior) has been accepted not only in psychology but also in other fields such as sociology, political science, etc., including philosophy. For example, the influence of behaviorism on philosophy is obvious in neopositivism and especially in analytic philosophy. Furthermore, the contemporary behaviorists discuss the philosophy of behaviorism. In his book, *About Behaviorism*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1974, B. F. Skinner says, "Behaviorism is not the science of human behavior; it is the philosophy of that science." (p. 3.)

[5] Mao, *Mao Tse-tung chi* 毛澤東選集 (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*) in one volume, Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1964. This one-volume edition is actually the combined form of four volumes of *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* published in 1951. However, toward the completion of our study (April 1977), we obtained *Mao Tse-tung hsüan chi, ti wu chüan* 毛澤東選集, 第五卷, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. 5, Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1977.

But for our quotations (apart from a few exceptions), we use the English translation, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* vols. 1–4, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1967 and *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, vol. 5, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1977; and this work will be abbreviated hereafter as *Mao 1, Mao 2, Mao 3, Mao 4* and *Mao 5*.

[6] Mao, *Mao Tse-tung chu-tso hsüan-tu* 毛澤東著作選讀 (*Selected Readings From the Works of Mao Tse-tung*), Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1957; its English translation is: *Selected Readings From the Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1971.

[7] Mao, *Four Essays on Philosophy*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1968; hereafter abbreviated as *Essays*.

[8] Mao, *Mao Tse-tung chi*, ten vols. 毛澤東集 (*The Collected Works of Mao Tse-tung: Before 1949*), Hong Kong, 1975. The work in our possession was reprinted in Hong Kong in 1975 but without the name of the publisher. Actually, the work was originally published in Tokyo in 1970.

[9] Mao, *Mao Tse-tung ssu-hsiang wan-sui* 毛澤東思想萬歲, (*Long Live the Thought of Mao Tse-tung*), Taipei, Institute of International Relations, 1974 edition, 4 vols. Stuart Schram has made a study of some of the texts; Cf. his (edited) book, *Chairman Mao Talks to the People: Talks and Letters: 1956–1971*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1974, pp. 49–57 (trans. by John Chinnery and Tieyun).

[10] The English translation of the Chinese *Long Live the Thought of Mao Tse-tung* is *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung*, Virginia, The U.S. Joint Publications Research Services, 1973.

[11] For all above secondary sources, see the bibliography at the end of this book.

CHAPTER 1

[1] The term 'historicity' is used here to indicate the fundamental structure of man, existing in both a temporal and a spatial, or better, cultural context. Temporal, because man's existence unfolds itself in a past-present-future dimension; cultural because man's

existence always takes place in a particular cultural dimension. These two dimensions constitute man's history, and hence are absolutely necessary for an understanding of it.

Cf. Michael Murray, *Modern Philosophy of History: Its Origin and Destination*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1970, pp. 13–23. Edward H. Carr, *What is History?*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1962, pp. 24–35.

[2] There are two approaches to the periodization of modern China. One is to take the Opium War of 1839–1842 as the starting point; the other is to begin with the transition from the Ming (1368–1644) to the Ch'ing (1644–1911). C. Y. Hsü seems to combine these two approaches into a synthetic view. Taking the Opium War as a 'viable point of departure', he goes back to the traditional Chinese state and society which conditioned China's reaction to the foreign challenge of the nineteenth century. This is also our approach. Before examining the modern history of China, however, we shall consider briefly traditional society prior to the nineteenth century to give us the necessary historical and intellectual background to study Mao's life and intellectual formation.

Cf. Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, London, Oxford UP, 1970, pp. 3–16, especially 4–7.

Harold Kahn and Albert Feuerwerker, 'The Ideology of Scholarship: China's New Historiography', in Albert Feuerwerker, ed., *History in Communist China*, Cambridge, The M.I.T. Press, 1968, pp. 1–13.

Albert Feuerwerker, 'China's History in Marxian Dress', *Ibid.*, pp. 14–44.

Li Fang-ch'en 李方晨, *Chung-kuo chin-tai shih* 中國近代史 (*Modern History of China*) Taipei, Yang Ming ch'u-pan she, 1960, pp. 1–5.

Teng Ssu-yü and J. K. Fairbank, *China's Response to the West*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1954, pp. 1–5.

Chung-kuo chin-tai shih fen-ch'i wen-t'i t'ao-lun chi 中國近代史分期問題討論集 (*A Collection of Papers on the Question of Periodizing Modern Chinese History*), compiled by the Editorial Department of *Li-shih yen-chiu* (Historical Research), Peking, 1957.

[3] Ever since the Opium War (1839–1842), China had been undergoing a process of continuous transformation, from a stable traditional society to disintegration to revolution. Internal disorder caused by peasant revolts and external encroachments by Western powers created within modern China a revolutionary tempo, culminating in the revolutions of 1911 and 1949. In this sense, this period of modern China can be rightly called the period of 'the Chinese Revolution'.

C. P. Fitzgerald, *Revolution in China*, London, The Cresset Press, 1952, pp. 1–32 (Chapter 2 – The Origins of the Chinese Revolution).

[4] Although China's history goes further back, to time immemorial, the first 'unified' empire of China was established by (*Ch'in*) *shih huang-ti* (秦) 始皇帝 in 221 B.C. Since then, emperors succeeded emperors, dynasties followed dynasties, and so the Chinese imperial system lasted until the Revolution of 1911, when the Ch'ing dynasty was finally overthrown and the Republic of China was established.

E. O. Reischauer and J. K. Fairbank, *East Asia: The Great Tradition*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960, pp. 86–88.

John K. Fairbank, E. O. Reischauer, and A. M. Craig, *East Asia: The Modern Transformation*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965, pp. 639–643.

[5] Ch'ien Tuan-sheng, *The Government and Politics of China*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1961, pp. 30–31.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 35–38.

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35.

These six administrative Boards or Ministries (i.e., Rites, Civil Office, War, Punishment, Revenue, Public Works) were the departmental divisions in the Sui dynasty, and these divisions remained until the end of the Ch'ing. But when the first Chinese empire was established, there were nine Ministries which were reduced to six during the Han dynasty. In the Sui dynasty these six ministries became permanently fixed offices.

[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 42–43.

[9] The family, one of the most fundamental social units in any society, played an all-important role in traditional China where the whole empire was considered as a family 'writ-large'. Symbolically and culturally the emperor was the head of the imperial court or royal family, and hence was head of the entire empire, that is, of all families. Economically and socially, the success or failure of the administration of the empire depended almost entirely on the family system.

Cf. Hu Chang-tu, *China: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*, New Haven, Hraf Press, 1960, pp. 157–158.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 163–169.

[11] Fairbank, *The Great Tradition*, pp. 101–107.

Ch'ien, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–26.

[12] Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy 1*, trans. by Derk Bodde, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1952, pp. 66–73; hereafter abbreviated as *HCP1*.

Chan Wing-tsit, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1963, p. 16; hereafter abbreviated as *Source Book*.

Jen 仁 is one of the most difficult Chinese philosophical concepts to translate. It can be translated as 'humanity', 'kindness', 'benevolence' or 'human heartedness'. In short, it seems to connote all good qualities of man or mankind.

[13] In traditional Chinese society the Emperor was considered as the 'Son of Heaven', possessing the 'Mandate of Heaven', and there were believed to be correlations between nature and human events. As a result, heaven would warn of any impropriety by the Emperor through natural calamities or extraordinary omens. Such an idea certainly had its origin in the Classics, for example, the *I Ching*, which was originally concerned with divination. Taoism and the Yin-yang school perhaps also contributed to the development of such a belief.

Cf. Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, New York, The Free Press, 1966, pp. 132–134; hereafter abbreviated as *SHCP*.

John K. Fairbank, *The United States and China*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 3rd ed., 1971, p. 92, hereafter abbreviated as *US & C.*

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 90.

[15] Like every dynasty before it, the Ch'ing (the last one) seems also to have followed the so-called 'dynastic cycle' of development-zenith-decline. Established in 1644, the Ch'ing took a century to consolidate and develop its empire. But by the mid-eighteenth century, it had made tremendous achievements and had thus reached its height of glory. At home, the country enjoyed peace and prosperity; great works were produced in literature, art and history. Abroad, the Ch'ing government also succeeded in expanding its frontiers even farther than those of earlier ages. In fact, the Middle Kingdom became, at least in the Chinese mind, the mightiest in the world.

But power and glory were not always a blessing; nor did all those who enjoyed them know how to use them properly. Thus, true to the Tao's dialectical movement,

the Ch'ing began to follow the course of dynastic decline in the mid-eighteenth century.

Cf. Fairbank, *US & C*, p. 92. Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–52. Fu Le-ch'eng 傅樂成 *Chung-kuo t'ung shih*, (hsia) 中國通史, 下 (*A General History of China*) Vol. 2, Taipei, Wen-hui ch'u-pan she, 1970, pp. 673–693.

[16] Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 168–169.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Ho P'ing-ti, *Studies on the Population of China: 1386–1953*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 1959, p. 101.

[18] Fairbank, *US & C.*, pp. 137–142.

[19] Li Chien-nung, *The Political History of China: 1840–1928*, trans. by Teng Ssu-yü and Jeremy Ingalls, Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1956, pp. 24–41.

Jean Chesneaux, Marianne Bastid and Marie-Claire Bergère, *China from the Opium War to the 1911 Revolution*, trans. by Anne Destenay, New York, Pantheon Books, 1976, pp. 56–57.

[20] Fairbank, *US & C.*, pp. 142–149.

[21] *Ibid.*, pp. 145 ff.

[22] Li Chien-nung, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–110.

Teng and Fairbank, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–72.

[23] Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 348–352. Hsü lists six reasons for China's half-hearted and inefficient response to Western encroachment: (1) lack of coordination in the government, (2) limited vision of the advocates, (3) shortage of capital, (4) foreign imperialism, (5) technical backwardness and moral degradation, and (6) social and psychological inertia.

[24] Li Chien-nung, *op. cit.*, pp. 144–163.

Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 423–457.

[25] Li Chien-nung, *op. cit.*, pp. 175–179.

Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 467–473.

Fu-tan ta-hsüeh li-shih hsi yü Chung-kuo chin-tai chiao-yen tsu 復旦大學歷史系與中國近代史教研組, *Chung-kuo chin-tai chien shih* 中國近代簡史 (*A Short History of Modern China*), Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1975, pp. 239–244.

[26] Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 499.

[27] Harold Z. Schiffrin, *Sun Yat-sen and the Origins of the Chinese Revolution*, Berkeley, California UP, 1968, pp. 344–366.

Li Chien-nung, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–205. Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 549–552.

[28] There were altogether ten abortive attempts at revolution. Cf. Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 552.

[29] Li Chien-nung, *op. cit.*, p. 256.

[30] Li Chien-nung, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 563.

[31] Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 569.

[32] Ch'i Hsi-sheng, *Warlord Politics in China*, Stanford UP, 1976, p. 1.

[33] *Ibid.*, pp. 2–6.

James E. Sheridan, *China in Disintegration: The Republican Era in Chinese History 1912–1949*, New York, The Free Press, 1975, pp. 57–77.

[34] Sheridan, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

[35] Lucian Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915–1949*, trans. by Muriel Bell, Stanford UP, 1971, pp. 82–90.

[36] Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 582–591.

[37] In the late 1910's in China, "Problems vs. Isms" symbolized an intellectual debate

between two groups, led symbolically by Hu Shih on the one hand and on the other by Li Ta-chao. In his article 'More Study of Problems, Less Talk of "Isms"', Hu Shih, heavily influenced by John Dewey, advocated solving social and political problems practically, taking one issue at a time, while refuting any abstract doctrine or 'ism'. Li Ta-chao, an avid student of Marxism, insisted that all problems – economic, social, political or other – were all interrelated and therefore had to be solved by a unified doctrine or 'ism'.

Cf. Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, Stanford UP, 1960, pp. 218–222.

[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 1–15. Also, it is interesting to note that the subtitle of Chow's work is 'Intellectual Revolution in Modern China', and rightly so.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 248–249.

Maurice Meisner, *Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism*, New York, Atheneum, 1974, pp. 117–121.

Wang Chien-ming 王健民, *Chung-kuo kung ch'an tang shih kao* 中國共產黨史稿 (*History of the Chinese Communist Party*), vol. I, Taipei, Hsien Ping ch'u-pan she, 1965, pp. 28–35.

[40] Since our purpose here is not to provide a detailed and documented biography of Mao, we did not do any original research but rather made use of existing and important works on this subject. Among the most important are:

Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, New York, Grove Press, rev. and enlarg. ed., 1968, hereafter abbreviated as *Red Star*.

Edgar Snow, *Red China Today*, New York, Random House, rev. ed., 1971, hereafter abbreviated as *Red China*.

Jerome Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, London, Oxford UP, 1972; hereafter abbreviated as *Mao & CR*.

Jerome Ch'en, *Mao* (*Great Lives Observed*), Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, 1969.

Stuart R. Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, New York, Praeger, 1972; hereafter abbreviated as *Thought*.

Stuart R. Schram, *Mao Tse-tung*, Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1970.

Han Suyin, *The Morning Deluge: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution: 1895–1954*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1972.

Hsiao-yu, *Mao Tse-tung and I Were Beggars*, Syracuse, New York, Syracuse UP, 1959.

Robert Payne, *Portrait of a Revolutionary: Mao Tse-tung*, New York, Abelard-Schuman, 1961.

Hsiao San 蕭三, *Mao Tse-tung t'ung-chih* 毛澤東同志 (*Comrade Mao Tse-tung*), Shanghai, Hsin hua shu-tien, 1949.

Hsiao San, *Mao Tse-tung t'ung-chih ti ch'ing shao-nien shih-tai* 毛澤東同志的青少年時代 (*Comrade Mao Tse-tung's Boyhood and Youth*), Shanghai, Hsin hua shu-tien, rev. ed., 1950.

Li Jui 李銳, *Mao Tse-tung t'ung-chih ti ch'u-ch'i ko-ming huo-tung* 毛澤東同志的初期革命活動 (*The Early Revolutionary Activities of Comrade Mao Tse-tung*), Peking, Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien ch'u-pan she, 1957.

[41] Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, pp. 17, 19.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[44] Edgar Snow provides some details of Mao's early rebellions at home against his father. For example, at the age of ten, Mao was so severely beaten that he ran away from school and was afraid to return home for fear of another beating. He wandered in the city until he was found. According to Snow, Mao also made use, humorously, of revolutionary terms. For example, there were two 'parties' in the family: One was the ruling power, i.e., his father; the other was the ruled, i.e., Mao himself, his mother and his brothers and sisters. There was opposition between these two parties. The strategy of the ruled was to use the 'united front of the opposition'. It is interesting, however, to point out that this is the very source of many late psychological interpretations of Mao, his character and even his revolutionary activities. The classic example is Lucien Pye's book, *Mao Tse-tung: the Man in the Leader*, New York, Basic Books, 1976.

Cf. Edgar Snow, *Red China*, pp. 142–144; and *Red Star*, pp. 131–133.

[45] Snow, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

Hsiao San, *Mao's Boyhood and Youth*, pp. 41–46.

[46] Snow, *Red China*, p. 146.

Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, p. 32.

[47] Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, pp. 52–53.

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Li Jui, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[49] In the winter of 1919, Mao seems to have read some Chinese translations of Marxism. Among them, Mao himself mentioned three: the *Communist Manifesto, Class Struggle* (by Kautsky), and *History of Socialism* (by Kirkup). By the summer of 1920, Mao himself considered himself a Marxist.

Cf. Snow, *Red China*, p. 149; and *Red Star*, p. 155.

Li Jui, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

With regard to Chinese translations of Marxist works before 1921, c.f. Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement*, p. 299, where he writes:

> A Chinese translation of the first section of *The Communist Manifesto* was published in the students' monthly, *The Citizens*, on November 1, 1919 (Vol. II, No. 1), and that of Marx's preface to *Das Kapital* on October 1, 1920 in the same magazine (Vol. II, No. 3). The manifesto was translated in full into Chinese by Ch'en Wang-tao and published in April 1920. After these translations, Part III of Engel's *Anti-Dühring* (1877) was translated in *The Construction* in December 1920 (Vol. III, No. 1). Marx's preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* (1859) was translated in *The Eastern Miscellany* in January 1921 (Vol. XVIII, No. 1), and Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* was first rendered into Chinese by Shih Jen-yung and published in the *New World* (*Hsin shih-chieh*) fortnightly after 1912. A translation of the latter by Cheng Tz'u-ch'uan was published in book form by the Shanghai Ch'ün-i shu-chü in 1921. The above includes the list of almost all major works of Marx and Engels which Chinese students of Marx could read in their own language in the years before 1921.

[50] Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, p. 79.

[51] The statement that Mao did not play an important or decisive role in the First Congress is supported by two facts. One, although Mao was elected as the secretary of

the First Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, he was not elected as a member of the Central Committee which consisted of Ch'en Tu-hsiu 陳獨秀 (who was not able to attend the Congress, nor was Li Ta-chao 李大釗) as the Party Secretary, Chang Kuo-tao 張國燾 as the head of the organization department, and Li Ta 李達 as the head of the propaganda department. Secondly, the fact that the delegates who were of varied and heterodox ideological tendencies did not have unanimous resolutions indicated that Mao was just one of them and did not exert all-important or decisive leadership.

Cf. Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, pp. 79–80. Snow, *Red China*, p. 149. Schram, *Mao Tse-tung*, Baltimore, Penguin, 1966, pp. 65–66.

[52] Han Suyin, *op. cit.*, pp. 90–94.
Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, pp. 88–93.
Hu Hua 胡華, *Chung-kuo ko-ming chiang-i* 中國革命講義 (*Lecture Notes on the Chinese Revolution*), Peking, Chung-kuo jen-min ta-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1962, pp. 52–53.
Shih Chün 史筠, *Chung-kuo kung-ch'an tang ti ch'eng-li* 中國共產黨的成立 (*The Establishment of the Chinese Communist Party*), Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1951, pp. 13–17.

[53] Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, p. 95.

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 124–126.
Hu Hua, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–201.

[55] Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 650–652.
Hu Hua, *op. cit.*, pp. 214–224.

[56] Hu Ch'iao-mu 胡喬木, *Chung-kuo kung-ch'an tang ti san-shih nien* 中國共產黨的三十年 (*Thirty Years of the Chinese Communist Party*), Peking, Jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1964, pp. 18–19.
Snow, *Red China*, p. 150.

[57] *Mao 1*, p. 23.

[58] Snow, *Red China*, p. 153.

[59] Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, p. 159.
Snow, *Red China*, pp. 153–154; *Red Star*, p. 186.
Hu Hua, *op. cit.*, pp. 141–142.

[60] Snow, *Red China*, p. 157.
Hu Ch'iao-mu, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–35.

[61] Hu Ch'iao-mu, *op. cit.*, p. 36. Hu Hua, *op. cit.*, p. 286. Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, p. 189. Snow, *Red China*, p. 158. Han Suyin, *op. cit.*, pp. 278–282.

[62] Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 682–685.
Li Fang-ch'en, *op. cit.*, pp. 943–960.

[63] Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 661–663.
Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, pp. 229–236.

[64] Schram, *Thought*, pp. 265–267.

[65] Hu Ch'iao-mu, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
Wang Chien-ming, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 724–728.
Han Suyin, *op. cit.*, pp. 237–270; 314–317.

[66] Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, p. 255.
Han Suyin, *op. cit.*, p. 423.

[67] Ch'en, *Mao & CR*, pp. 278–279.
Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 726–727.

[68] Hsü, *op. cit.*, p. 731.

[69] Han Suyin, *op. cit.*, pp. 522–523.

O. Edmund Clubb, *China and Russia*, New York, Columbia UP, 1971, p. 382.

Harold C. Hinton, *China's Turbulent Quest*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1972, pp. 37–40.

Alfred D. Low, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute: An Analysis of the Polemics*, Cranbury, NJ, Associated University Presses, 1976, pp. 56–61.

[70] Fairbank, *US & C.*, pp. 351–354, 357–362.

Hsinhua News Agency (ed.), *New China's First Quarter Century*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1975, p. 9.

[71] James C. Hsiung, *Ideology and Practice*, New York, Praeger, 1973, pp. 187–191.

Harold C. Hinton, *An Introduction to Chinese Politics*, New York, Praeger, 1973, pp. 37–48; hereafter abbreviated as *Chinese Politics*.

Fairbank, *US & C.*, pp. 369–375. Hsü, *op. cit.*, pp. 751–754.

[72] Fairbank, *US & C.*, p. 386.

O. Edmund Clubb, *20th Century China*, New York, Columbia UP, 2nd ed., 1972, pp. 390–391.

[73] Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shao-ch'i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, Berkeley, California UP, 1974, pp. 47–50.

Fairbank, *US & C.*, p. 383. Hinton, *Chinese Politics*, p. 43.

[74] Jean Daubier, *A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution*, New York, Random House, 1974, p. 31.

Dittmer, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

Since one of the main purposes of the Cultural Revolution was to expose the revisionism of Liu and his associates who were in control of the Central Committee in Peking, Mao, having secured the support of Minister of Defense, Lin Piao, launched the Cultural Revolution from Shanghai and moved gradually toward Peking.

[75] Daubier, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–84.

Hinton, *Chinese Politics*, pp. 61–64.

[76] Like its beginning, the Cultural Revolution had no official end. But with the establishment of all of the provincial 'revolutionary committees' and the convocation of the Ninth Party Congress, the Cultural Revolution actually came to an end.

Cf. Daubier, *op. cit.*, pp. 253–255. Hinton, *Chinese Politics*, p. 72.

[77] The so-called "May 7" schools are Party institutions, in existence since 1969, whose primary purpose is to eliminate the evil of bureaucratization. Ideally, cadres, intellectuals and administrators, who do not usually perform manual tasks, go periodically to such schools to labor along with the masses, so that they can overcome the danger of becoming 'bureaucrats' or 'revisionists'.

[78] With the hindsight of the Lin Piao Affair, we now know that many extremist activities during the Cultural Revolution were largely caused – at least according to the Chinese official explanation – by Lin and his associates. On this subject, an up-to-date re-evaluation of the Cultural Revolution seems necessary.

[79] Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution*, New York, Random House, 1972, p. 73; hereafter abbreviated as *Revolution*.

Franz Michael, 'Ideology and the Cult of Mao' in Frank N. Traeger and William Henderson, *Communist China 1949–1969*, New York, New York UP, 1972, p. 38.

[80] 'The Constitution of the Communist Party of China: 1969' in Winberg Chai, *The Search for a New China*, New York, G. P. Putnam, 1975, p. 170.
[81] *Ibid.*, pp. 155–159.
[82] According to the Soviet Union's version, a Trident jet aircraft crashed in the Mongolian People's Republic on the night of September 12 or 13, 1971. Subsequently, the Chinese government 'concurred' with the news but provided its own explanation. That is, Lin's death occurred during his flight to the Soviet Union after his plot to assassinate Mao had failed.

Cf. Hinton, *Chinese Politics*, pp. 80–81.

Despite the official explanation of the Lin Piao Affair, supported by a number of secret documents released by the Chinese Communist Party, the whole event remains a mystery. Perhaps the other side of the story will never come to light, but will die with Lin Piao himself.

Cf. Chai, *op. cit.*, pp. 151–153; 221–249 (Appendix 3: Secret Documents on the 'Lin Piao Affair').
[83] Dittmer, *op. cit.*, pp. 44–46.

Robert C. North, *Chinese Communism*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, pp. 208–212.

Hinton, *China's Turbulent Quest*, pp. 96–105.
[84] The shift in China's policy toward the U.S. provides us with a concrete application by Mao of his own theory of dialectic, which should be based on *flexibility* in any concrete situation. In this case, Mao seems to have concluded, at least in the late 1960's, that the primary contradiction was the Sino-Soviet relationship while the Sino-U.S. relationship became the secondary contradiction. However, many Chinese leaders, including Lin Piao, did not seem to have perceived such a subtle change in China's new situation in the international political arena.

CHAPTER 2

[1] The texts we have chosen are only some of the most important ones which demonstrate Mao's idea of *huo-hsüeh huo-yung* 活學活用. While there are others, those which we have chosen are sufficient to show that its 'textual origin' is in Mao's prolific writings.
[2] Mao, *Essays*, p. 131.
[3] *Mao 3*, p. 43.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 38.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.
[7] Mao, *Essays*, p. 131.
[8] *Mao 3*, p. 38. Here Mao emphasizes very strongly the importance of a critical attitude in learning. Without a critical evaluation of data, neither intelligent nor creative learning can take place.
[9] *Mao 1*, p. 187.
[10] *Mao 2*, pp. 167–168.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 168.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 209–210.
[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 380–381.
[14] *Loc. cit.*

[15] *Loc. cit.*
[16] *Ibid.*, p. 210.
[17] If we had to summarize Mao's method of *huo-hsüeh huo-yung* in one word, that word would be 'flexibility', which is its very center and foundation as well as the guiding principle for its operation. As such, flexibility provides, as it were, a key to understanding Mao's methodology.
[18] *Mao 1*, p. 183.
[19] *Mao 2*, p. 201.
[20] *Mao 1*, p. 323.
[21] *Mao 1*, p. 184.
[22] *Mao 3*, pp. 43–44.
[23] *Mao 1*, p. 221.
[24] *Mao 2*, p. 308.
[25] *Mao 2*, pp. 164–165.
[26] *Mao 1*, pp. 218, 334; *Mao 2*, pp. 164, 248, 464; *Mao 3*, pp. 186, 153, 174, 177; *Mao 4*, pp. 378, 438, 420, etc.
[27] *Mao 1*, p. 211; *Mao 2*, pp. 147, 335, *Mao 4*, pp. 311, 385, 372, 416, etc.
[28] *Mao 2*, p. 209.
[29] *Mao 3*, p. 81.
[30] *Loc. cit.*
[31] *Mao 1*, pp. 325–326.
[32] *Mao 4*, p. 11.
[33] *Mao 3*, p. 255.
[34] *Mao 3*, p. 81.
[35] *Mao 3*, p. 60.
[36] *Mao 3*, p. 19.
[37] *Mao 3*, p. 21.
[38] *Mao 3*, p. 24.
[39] *Mao 1*, p. 323.
[40] *Mao 1*, p. 185.
[41] *Mao 2*, p. 151.
[42] *Mao 2*, p. 133.
[43] *Mao 2*, p. 144.
[44] *Mao 3*, p. 18.
[45] *Mao 1*, p. 296.
[46] *Mao 1*, p. 297.
[47] *Mao 1*, p. 299.
[48] *Mao 1*, p. 296.
[49] *Mao 1*, p. 304.
[50] *Mao 1*, p. 308.
[51] *Mao 1*, p. 312.
[52] *Mao 3*, p. 74.
[53] *Mao 1*, p. 313.

CHAPTER 3

[1] We must point out that this chapter is actually our reconstruction of Mao's theory of

dialectic, but one which is based almost exclusively on Mao's own texts, that is, the four volumes of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. Although it may appear to be too 'textual', we think that objectivity is more important than style.

[2] *Mao 1*, p. 345.

[3] Mao, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People', in Mao, *Four Essays on Philosophy*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1968, p. 91; hereafter abbreviated as *Essays*.

[4] *Mao 1*, p. 320.

[5] *Loc. cit.*

[6] *Mao 1*, p. 313.

[7] *Mao 1*, p. 320.

[8] *Loc. cit.*

[9] *Mao 1*, p. 313.

[10] Mao, *Mao Tse-tung hsüan chi* 毛澤東選集 (*Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, one vol.), Peking, Jen-min ch'u pan she 1969, p. 294. This is my own translation which differs in emphasis slightly from the standard English translation. Cf. *Mao 1*, p. 330 ("Motion, things, processes . . . all are contradictions").

[11] *Mao 1*, p. 316.

[12] *Mao 1*, p. 322.

[13] Mao, *Essays*, p. 102.

[14] *Mao 1*, p. 322.

[15] *Mao 3*, p. 61.

[16] Mao, *Essays*, p. 94.

[17] Mao, *Essays*, p. 112.

[18] Mao, *Essays*, p. 127.

[19] Mao, *Essays*, p. 111.

[20] *Mao 1*, p. 121.

[21] *Mao 1*, p. 314.

[22] *Mao 1*, p. 307.

[23] *Mao 1*, p. 335.

[24] *Mao 1*, p. 306.

[25] *Mao 1*, p. 321.

[26] *Mao 1*, p. 317.

[27] *Mao 2*, p. 156.

[28] The traditional Chinese story of *mao-tun* 矛盾 comes from Han Fei-tzu's 韓非子 *Nan Shih* 難勢 ('A Critique of the Doctrine of Position') in Ch'en Ch'i-yu 陳奇猷 (ed.), *Han Fei-tzu chi shih* (hsia) 韓非子集釋, 下 (*Complete Collected Works of Han Fei-tzu, With Commentaries*, Vol. 2), Shanghai, Jen-min Ch'u-pan she 1974, p. 888. And W. F. Liao (transl.), *The Complete Works of Han Fei-tzu*, London, Arthur Probsthain, 1959, pp. 203–204.

[29] *Mao 1*, p. 343.

[30] *Mao 1*, p. 316.

[31] *Loc. cit.* Here Mao makes use of Engels' words.

[32] *Mao 1*, p. 330.

[33] *Loc. cit.* Also Cf. Note 10 of this same Chapter.

[34] *Mao 1*, p. 318.

[35] *Mao 3*, p. 61.

[36] Mao, *Essays*, p. 112.
[37] Mao, *Essays*, p. 127.
[38] *Mao 1*, p. 318.
[39] *Loc. cit.*
[40] *Mao 3*, p. 61.
[41] Mao, *Essays*, p. 112.
[42] *Mao 1*, pp. 326, 331, 343.
[43] *Mao 1*, p. 316.
[44] *Mao 1*, p. 330.
[45] *Mao 1*, p. 316.
[46] *Mao 1*, pp. 316–317.
[47] *Mao 1*, p. 314.
[48] *Mao 1*, pp. 121, 263, 331; Mao, *Essays*, pp. 80, 102.
[49] *Mao 1*, p. 317.
[50] *Loc. cit*. Here Mao makes use of Engels' words.
[51] *Mao 1*, p. 313.
[52] *Mao 1*, p. 319. Here Mao makes use of Lenin's words.
[53] *Mao 1*, p. 318.
[54] *Loc cit.*
[55] *Mao 1*, p. 320.
[56] *Loc. cit.*
[57] *Mao 1*, p. 332.
[58] *Mao 1*, p. 331.
[59] *Loc. cit.*
[60] *Mao 1*, p. 333.
[61] *Mao 1*, pp. 319–320.
[62] *Mao 1*, p. 325.
[63] *Mao 1*, pp. 325–326.
[64] *Mao 1*, p. 328.
[65] *Loc. cit.*
[66] *Mao 1*, p. 324.
[67] *Mao 1*, p. 329.
[68] *Mao 1*, pp. 320–321.
[69] *Mao 1*, p. 321.
[70] *Mao 1*, p. 337.
[71] *Mao 1*, p. 338.
[72] *Mao 1*, p. 342.
[73] *Loc. cit.*
[74] *Mao 1*, p. 333.
[75] *Loc. cit.*
[76] *Mao 1*, p. 335.
[77] *Loc. cit.*
[78] *Mao 1*, pp. 333–334.
[79] *Mao 1*, p. 334.
[80] *Mao 1*, pp. 334–335.
[81] *Mao 1*, pp. 335–356.
[82] *Mao 1*, p. 336.

[83] *Mao 1*, pp. 321–322.
[84] *Mao 1*, p. 343.
[85] *Mao 1*, p. 334.
[86] *Mao 1*, p. 346.

CHAPTER 4

[1] Not only there is no 'Chinese philosophy' as such; on the contrary, Chinese philosophy has always been 'plural'. Throughout more than twenty-five centuries of Chinese history, there have been many philosophical schools, some of which have quite different and often conflicting philosophical views. Such a variety of philosophical schools was first described in the *Chuang-tzu* (chapter 33) as *pai chia* (百家 'hundred schools'), referring to many different groups of scholars who propounded different and conflicting teachings – which was in contrast to the relative uniformity of philosophical teachings during Confucius' time. Thus, the term 'hundred schools' has come to refer to many and diverse schools, or groups of philosophies, thought or doctrines. Consequently, it is difficult if not impossible to speak of 'Chinese philosophy' as such. But among the 'hundred schools', the most important and influential ones have undoubtedly been Confucianism (& Neo-Confucianism), Taoism (& Neo-Taoism) and Buddhism.

[2] Arthur Wright, ed., *Studies in Chinese Thought*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967, p. 21.

[3] James Legge, trans., *The I Ching*, New York, Dover Publications, 1963, p. 254; hereafter abbreviated as *I Ching*.

[4] James Legge, trans., *The Texts of Taoism: The Tao Te Ching of Lao Tzu, The Writings of Chung Tzu, Part I*, New York, Dover Publications, 1962, p. 85; hereafter abbreviated as *Taoism I* or *II*.

[5] The reason why in Chinese philosophy there is no dichotomy between supernatural and natural is twofold. First, no Chinese philosopher has ever expressed a significant interest in religion, or developed a theory of creation (as so many Western philosophers have done). Of course, this does not mean that religion does not exist in China. For, Confucianism and Taoism can be both a religion and a philosophy. In addition, Buddhism, which is also both a philosophy and a religion, entered China as early as the first century A.D. and became a major force especially in the form of a popular religion in China after the collapse of the Han dynasty in the third century A.D.. But it is still true that Chinese philosophers as a whole did not show much interest in philosophizing on 'religion', or 'religious issues' as understood in the West. Secondly, because of such a lack of interest in religion, Chinese philosophers have always conceived of the universe as self-sufficient. As self-sufficient, the universe does not depend on any external, supernatural power or 'Creator'. In other words, all and everything in the universe constitutes a dynamic whole, i.e., Tao, and hence they are all natural.

Cf. Kenneth S. Latourette, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture*, New York, MacMillan, 1946, pp. 604–664. Hu Chang-tu, *China: Its People, Its Society, Its Culture*, New Haven, Hraf Press, 1960, pp. 110–139. Chan Wing-tsit, *Religious Trends in Modern China*, New York, Octagon Books, 1969, pp. 136–185 ("The Religion of the Masses"), 217–264 ("The Religion of the Intellectual").

[6] In the Taoist tradition, Tao is the Beginning of all things, the Way in which all things

should pursue their natural course, and the End toward which all things evolve. In this perspective, Tao can be considered as the Ultimate Synthesis, with its capacity to absorb all things.

Cf. Fung, *HCP I*, pp. 177–180. Chan, *Source Book*, p. 136.

[7] Since there has never been any strong tradition of 'theology' in China – the study of religious faith, spiritual beings or God – the Chinese seem to have used philosophy (or better, culture) to perform the function of 'religion'. As a result, the Chinese place almost supreme value on 'philosophy', and therefore have developed a coherent and comprehensive philosophy based on humanistic values which serve as guidelines for man and society. It is within this context we can say that in all of its thinking and acting, the Chinese mind follows its own 'rationale' and hence has its own logic.

[8] In China, philosophy is not merely an attempt to acquire pure knowledge, but also a sincere effort to form one's character according to the philosophical knowledge one has acquired. In other words, "philosophy is not simply something to be *known*", writes Fung Yu-lan, "but is also something to be experienced." Furthermore, a philosopher is also supposed to reflect upon his own lived experience, distilling and expressing it in the form of suggestive language – proverbs, allusions, aphorisms, etc. Cf. Fung Yu-lan, *SHCP*, pp. 10–14.

[9] Since the Five Classics which contain historical documents, poems and songs and philosophical insights, are the earliest and most important works in China, they have been respected by all major philosophers and schools alike. The Five Classics are: (1) *Shu Ching* 書經 (*Book of History*) which is a collection of speeches, prayers and other documents given on various occasions from the time of the legendary Emperor Yao to the early Chou. Despite some later forgeries, the *Shu Ching* as a whole provides us with valuable historical records; a few of them may go back to the first millenium B.C.; (2) *Shih Ching* 詩經 (*Book of Odes*) which is a collection of 305 poems and songs, including those sung at religious and official functions and popular songs from the various states of early Chou times; (3) *Ch'un Ch'iu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) which is a very brief year-by-year chronology of the state of *Lu* extending from 722 to 481 B.C.; (4) *Li Chi* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*) which is a compilation of Confucian rites and rituals performed during the early years of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–220 A.D.). This classic was very important because it served as the basis for Confucian ethics, guiding not only individual human behavior but also social order; (5) the *I Ching* 易經 (*Book of Changes*) which consists of an original corpus dating from approximately the beginning of the Chou dynasty, and several appendices of more philosophical thought (known as the 'Ten Wings' *Shih I* 十翼). As a whole, it contains some popular omen lore and a great number of other auguries, some quite specific and others enigmatic – all of which were probably used for divination during the early years of the Chou dynasty.

The above material is taken from Fung's *HCP I*, pp. 412–416, pp. 379–399; Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 4–5, 263–270; and J. K. Fairbank and E. O. Reichauer, *East Asia: The Great Tradition*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1958, pp. 64–71.

[10] *Analects* (7:19), in Legge, *Confucius*, p. 201.

[11] *Shu Ching* 書經 (*Book of History*) is one of the Five Classics, c.f. Note 9 above.

[12] The *Erh-shih ssu shih* 二十四史 (*The Twenty-four Dynastic Histories*), which were the official histories of each dynasty from the Han to the Ming, was compiled during the reign of the Ch'ien Lung Emperor (1736–1795) in the Ch'ing dynasty. Although there are several editions, the most commonly known and used is the *Wu-ying tien* 武英殿

edition. C.f. *Chung-hua shu-chü pien-chi pu* (ed.) 中華書局編輯部, *Shih Chi* 史記 (*Historical Records*) Vol. 1, Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1972, p. 4.

[13] Charles A. Moore, ed., *The Chinese Mind: Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture*, Honolulu, East-West Center Press, 1965, p. 18.

[14] Chan, *Source Book*, p. 2.

[15] Even when the Chinese express an abstract idea, they tend to be specific and individualistic. For example, in the *Book of Odes*, there are 23 words which correspond to the concept of horse (Hajime Nakamura, *Way of Thinking of Eastern People*, ed. by Philip P. Wiener. Honolulu, The University Press of Hawaii, 1974, p. 178). When the Chinese address people, they use different words or phrases according to the status of the person addressed. They do so to treat each person as a unique individual with a definite status in the family or in society. For example, in expressing the fact of 'death', there are different words such as *peng* (崩), *hung* (薨) and *ssu* (死) to indicate the death of an emperor, an official (or a feudal lord), and a commoner respectively, (*Ibid.*, p. 185). However, this does not mean that abstraction is absent from Chinese philosophy. For, while the Chinese are concerned mainly with concrete things and express them as specifically as possible, they must also employ 'concepts' or 'abstract conceptualizations' such as 'horse', 'house', 'mountain' etc.. The basic concepts are necessary in order to make concrete things as specific as possible, for example, from 'horse' to 'fast horse', 'white horse', 'old horse' or 'sick horse'.

[16] James Legge, transl., *The Shoo King* (*Shu Ching*) (*Book of History*), Hong Kong. Henry Frowde, 1865, p. 258.

Chan, W. T., 'Chinese Theory and Practice, with Special Reference to Humanism', in Moore, *The Chinese Mind*, p. 15.

[17] *Analects* (2:13) in Legge, *Confucius*, p. 150.

[18] *Analects* (5:9) in Legge, *Confucius*, p. 176.

[19] The *Chuang-tzu*, Ch. 33.

[20] Chu Hsi, *Chu-tzu ch'üan shu* 朱子全書 (*Complete Works of Chu Hsi*) (III 8a–b), in Chan, 'Chinese Theory and Practice', in Moore, *The Chinese Mind*, p. 15.

[21] Wang Yang-ming, *Ch'uan-hsi lu* sect. 5 傳習錄 (*Instructions for Practical Living; and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming*) trans. by Chan W. T., in Moore, *The Chinese Mind*, p. 15.

[22] The question of Marxism-ness and Chinese-ness of Mao's thought as a whole will be discussed in the sixth chapter. Cf. pp. 127–133 of this work.

[23] J. M. Bocheński, *The Methods of Contemporary Thought*, New York, Harper and Row, 1968, p. 9.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 15–29.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[26] *Loc. cit.*

[27] While the phenomenological method emphasizes 'objectivity', i.e., "back to the things themselves", we do not think that it can ever achieve total objectivity. Or, in Bocheński's words, "the objectivism to which phenomenologists aspire is only an ideal". Bocheński, *The Methods of Contemporary Thought*, p. 20.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 25–27.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[30] *Ibid.*, pp. 67–69, 108.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[32] Mao, *Essays*, p. 42.
[33] *Mao 1*, p. 322.
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 321.
[35] Having developed a strong personality from his childhood, having been taught by countless revolutionary experiences, Mao became a leader with an iron will and inner strength who always seemed ready to overcome any difficulties and solve any problems. But life did not promise Mao a rose garden; on the contrary, he experienced many failures.

Repeated failures taught Mao to develop a positive or dialectical mentality. "Men (can) gain rich experience", Mao says, "both from their successes and from their failures." (Mao, *Essays*, p. 134). Again, "Bad things can be turned into good things" (Mao, *Essays*, p. 125). "To sum up, we must learn to look at problems from all sides, seeing not only the positive side but also the *negative side* of things. Under certain conditions, a bad thing can lead to good results." (Mao, *Mao Tse-tung hsüan chi* 毛澤東選集, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, pp. 359. This is my own translation which differs slightly from Mao, *Essays*, p. 125.) In still another place Mao writes, "fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again . . . is the logic of the people." (*Mao 4*, p. 428). Such a positive attitude of Mao toward 'failures' fits very well into the dialectical law of transformationality – and all of this reminds us of a Chinese proverb, *shih-pai wei ch'eng-kung chih mu* 失敗爲成功之母 (Failure is the mother of success).
[36] From all the data we can gather, Mao seemed to be an atheist throughout his life, though in his last few years, Mao mentioned to Edgar Snow and to Nixon that he was "going to see God" (*chien shang-ti* 見上帝), i.e., about to die. Edgar Snow, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 89, 194–195. Snow's January 9, 1965 interview with Mao Tse-tung on this subject seems enlightening. Snow and Mao were talking about Sino-American relations (*Ibid.*, pp. 218–219):

> "Under the circumstances," I asked, "do you really see any hope of an improvement in Sino-American relations?"
>
> Yes, he thought there was hope. It would take time. Maybe there would be no improvement in his generation (lifetime). He was soon going to see God.[14]
>
> GOING TO SEE GOD
>
> "Speaking of your health, as we were not, judging from this evening you seem to be in good condition."
>
> Mao Tse-tung smiled wryly and replied that there was perhaps some doubt about that. He said again that he was getting ready to see God very soon. Did I believe it?
>
> "I wonder if you mean you are going to find out whether there is a God. Do you believe *that*?"
>
> No, he did not, but some people who claimed to be well informed said that there was a God. There seemed to be many gods and sometimes the same god could take all sides. In the wars of Europe the Christian God had been on the side of the British, the French, the Germans, and so on, even when they were fighting each other. At the time of the Suez Canal crisis God was united behind the British and the French but then there was Allah to back up the other side.

The following is the footnote in the above quotation:

> [14] In Chinese, "Pu chiu yao chien Shang-ti", "to be obliged to see God before long." Mao used *Shang-ti*, meaning the "Emperor God," supreme over all other gods, a term less ambiguous than *T'ien*, which can mean God as Nature or a universal primordial principle."

CHAPTER 5

[1] Legge, *I Ching*, p. 254.
[2] The central message of the *I Ching* can be summarized in one word: change, which is universal, both the beginning and the end of everything. As such, change can take infinite forms, as resulting from interaction between Heaven and Earth, from intercourse between Male and Female, as well as from natural alternations of the four seasons. In short, from change come all things. Cf. Legge, *I Ching*, pp. 214, 227, 254, 262, 349, 372, 393, 395, 429–432, etc.
[3] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 42), in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 160.
[4] The cyclical movement is one of return and repetition. Legge, *I Ching*, p. 233.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 207, 265–266, 438–439.
[6] The concept of stability actually symbolizes a constant and regular order of change, and hence it is by nature dynamic. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 227, 262, 372, 380.
[7] Milton C. Nahm, *Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*, New York, Meredith Publishing Company, 1964, pp. 46–52.
[8] Legge, *I Ching*, 389.
[9] Legge, *I Ching*, p. 389.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 395. Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 263, 266.
[11] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 42), in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 160.
[12] Confucius, *Analects* (4:8, 7:6, 15:28, 15:31, 17:4) in Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 26, 31, 44, 46. Fung, *HCP I* p. 59.
[13] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 25) in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 152.
[14] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 1), *Ibid.*, p. 139.
[15] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 40), *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[16] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 2), *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[17] The similarity lies in the fact that in the *I Ching* the movement of a thing is a movement of two poles: the thing itself and its opposite (or negation), while in Hegel's philosophy any thing is considered as both affirmative (of itself) and negative (of what is not itself).
[18] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 14, 16) in Chan, *Source Book*, pp. 146–147.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 204.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 204–205.
[21] Legge, *I Ching*, p. 239.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 213.
[23] *Ibid.*, p. 233.
[24] *Ibid.*, p. 238.
[25] *Ibid.*, p. 281.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 417.

[27] Fung, *HCP I*, p. 165.
[28] Fung, *SHCP*, p. 132.
[29] Fung, *HCP I*, p. 198.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 199.
[31] *Tao-te Ching* (ch. 45) in Chan, *Source Book*, p. 161.
[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 86–87.
[33] The *Chung-yung* (中庸 or *Doctrine of the Mean*) is actually one of the chapters in the *Li-chi* (禮記 or *Book of Rites*). It was selected by Chu Hsi (朱熹 1130–1200 A.D.) to form the "Four Books": the *Analects*, the *Book of Mencius*, the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. The *Chung-yung* has been ascribed to Tzu-ssu, the grandson of Confucius; but now modern scholars generally believe that it was probably written by a Confucian of Mencius' group living in the Ch'in or Han dynasty (Cf. Fung, *HCP I* pp. 369–371).
[34] *Ibid.*, p. 371.
[35] Confucius, *Analects* (6:27) in Legge, *Confucius*, pp. 193–194.
[36] Legge, *Mencius* (IIs, 2:22), p. 194.
[37] The author of the *Chung-yung* seems to have had a profound insight into 'psychology', or the relationship between the body and the mind. That is, physical control results in an inner peace and harmony which in turn will make a person a good person, one who behaves properly in a social context.
[38] Chan, *Source Book*, p. 86.
[39] Fung, *HCP I*, p. 198.
[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 197–200.
[41] Chan, *Source Book*, p. 28.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 44.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 39.
[46] It is important to note that while dialectical ideas were contained in the *I Ching*, the *Yin Yang* School, Taoism, etc., 'dialectic' *per se* was systematically explained only by the Mohist School. Its founder, Mo-tzu (墨子 between 479–381 B.C.; Cf. Fung, *HCP I* pp. 76–77) himself emphasized logical examination of principles and laid down three tests for any principle. His interest in logic was followed and further developed by the later Mohists who had to respond to the teachings of the School of Names (i.e., the Dialecticians) which were mainly based on logic. Thus they had to develop more solid arguments equally based on logic. To emphasize the precise use of terms, they developed 'definitions'; to achieve 'correct thinking', they developed systematic and logical arguments such as 'inference', something akin to 'induction and reduction', and 'dialectic' *per se*. But it must be remembered that all of these systematic and logical arguments were developed with a twofold purpose: to uphold their own doctrines ('universal love', 'frugality' and 'condemnation of war', all in terms of utilitarianism) and to refute the teachings of the dialecticians.

However, because the Mohist School was always accused of being unorthodox, that is, against the Confucian tradition, its teachings, including dialectic and logic, were ignored and hence never developed. Cf. Fung, *HCP I*, pp. 76–110, 246–278.
[47] *Ibid.*, p. 258.
[48] The phenomenological method includes the first three: (1), (2) and (3) ways.

[49] The method of logical verification includes the last three: (4), (5) and (6) ways.
[50] Fung, *HCP I*, p. 259.
[51] Fung, *SHCP*, p. 121.
[52] *Ibid.*, p. 122.
[53] A 'statement' is a case of two persons affirming or denying something. Whether they are right or wrong in their affirming or denying is immaterial. Cf. Fung, *HCP I* pp. 257–258.
[54] *Ibid.*, p. 257.
[55] One can ask whether dialectic also includes a case of two parties having a difference of opinion but both being wrong in their opinions.
[56] Fung, *HCP I*, p. 308.
[57] *Ibid.*, p. 311.
[58] This method of using dialectic is similar to the Socratic method of seeking a definition.
[59] Fung, *HCP I*, p. 308.
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 305.
[61] *Ibid.*, pp. 305–306.
[62] *Ibid.*, pp. 309–311.
[63] The summary is taken from chapter 3 of this work, pp. 46–54.
[64] Mao, *Essays*, p. 80.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 82.
[66] Since Mao's concept of contradiction is essentially a 'relational term' and since a relational term involves a frame of mutual reference, Mao's notion of complementarity is actually one of two constitutive elements of a relationship – the other being 'opposition'.

Cf. Frederick S. Johnston, *The Logic of Relationship*, New York, Philosophical Library, 1968, pp. 5–25.
[67] In the *Yin-yang* tradition, the *yin* and the *yang* always exist together. One cannot exist without the other; yet they are mutually opposed. Within this framework, their relationship is constituted by both their mutual opposition and their complementarity.
[68] If any existence or relationship exists in reality always as a dynamic whole, the distinction between their opposition and complementarity is not 'actual' or ontological (otherwise it could not constitute a dynamic whole) but only epistemological, i.e., in our knowing of that concrete existence we distinguish between opposition, complementarity as well as their relationship.
[69] McKeon, *op. cit.*, pp. xvi–xxii. W. D. Ross, *Aristotle: A Complete Exposition of His Works and Thought*, Cleveland, Ohio, The World Publishing Company, 1963, pp. 45–55, 56–61.
[70] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* (1:6–75a 13), in Ross, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[71] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[72] The material on the square of opposition is taken from Bocheński, *A History of Formal Logic*, pp. 57–63; from W. Kneale & M. Kneale, *op. cit.*, pp. 54–67. John A. Mourant, *Formal Logic*, New York, Macmillan, 1963, pp. 106–113.
[73] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* (Bk. 1, ch. 2, 72a, 13–14), in McKeon, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
[74] Bocheński, *A History of Formal Logic*, p. 59.
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 59.
[76] *Loc. cit.*

[77] Hegel, *Logic*, pp. 82–105.
Andries Sarlemijn, *Hegel's Dialectic*, Dordrecht-Holland, D. Reidel, 1975, pp. 105–111.
[78] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Transl. by T. M. Knox, London, Oxford UP, 1967, p. 10.
[79] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, transl. by J. B. Bailie, New York, Harper and Row, 1967, p. 81.
[80] *Ibid.*, pp. 80–82.
[81] Due to a common misunderstanding we cannot insist too strongly that Hegel's negativity is not merely negative, but rather it is positive-negative at the same time. That is, the qualities of any existent are the positive qualities or affirmations that existent possesses. But on the other hand, these positive qualities or affirmations also reveal what qualities the existent does not possess (i.e., non-qualities). In other words, the positive qualities that the existent does possess have a limiting role, i.e., to define the limits of that existent. Only in this context can we properly understand Hegel's concepts of 'being' and 'non-being' as well as their 'co-existence' (i.e., Being and non-being). Cf. *Hegel*, Logic, pp. 54, 82–105, 831–839.
[82] *Mao 1*, p. 308.
[83] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, in Robert C. Ticker, ed., *The Marx-Engels Reader*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1972, p. 113.
[84] Marx, *Capital I*, ed. by Engels, transl. by Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, New York, International Publishers, 1967, pp. 18–19.
[85] Marx, *The German Ideology* in Tucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 115–119, 124. Marx, *Grundrisse*, transl. by Martin Nicolaus, New York, Random House, 1973, pp. 106–107. Anthony Diggens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, London, Cambridge UP, 1971, pp. 23–34.
[86] Marx, *The German Ideology*, in Tucker, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[87] The reason why Engels considered dialectic as both an ontology and an epistemology is that not content to analyze the changes of society, he saw dialectic as applicable not only to society and human thought, but also to the external world, i.e., nature. Thus came his work, *Dialectics of Nature*, transl. by Clemens Dutt, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1940, pp. 1–26, 92, 206. Concerning Lenin's formulation of the three laws of dialectic, see, p. 26.
[88] J. M. Bocheński, *Soviet Russian Dialectical Materialism: Diamat*, Dordrecht, D. Reidel, 1963, pp. 30, 83–93. Thomas J. Blakeley, *Soviet Scholasticism*, Dordrecht, D. Reidel, 1961, p. 8. Z. A. Jordan, *The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1967, pp. 226–238.
[89] To discover in order to resolve (social contradictions) summarizes, we think, Mao's emphasis on 'praxis'. However, it is not clear whether or not Mao knew about Marx's conception of philosophy as changing rather than contemplating reality. Mao may or may not have known about Marx's idea. But in any event, because of the exigency of the Chinese revolution and because of the social orientation of the Chinese revolution and because of the social orientation of Chinese philosophy, Mao embraced the Marxist idea of dialectic or contradiction and applied it directly to solving the concrete contradictions of China's revolution.
[90] Cf. chapter 6 of this work, pp. 127–133.
[91] On the surface, such terms as 'class struggle', 'revolution' or 'rectification campaign'

– rather than contradiction – seem to be the 'primary term' in Mao's system. But upon analysis, the opposite is true. It is 'contradiction' which underlies all other important terms and hence is the primary term giving meaning to all other terms.

[92] Mao, *Essays*, p. 82.

[93] This does not mean that Mao's concept of 'contradiction' cannot be applied in the context of Nature. But its application is not as effective or powerful as in the contexts of social events and the cognitive process.

[94] Since Mao acquired Marxism via Lenin's interpretation of Engels, the quotations he used in his writings, especially on contradiction, show clearly that Mao's understanding of dialectic with regard to Nature is very similar to that of Engels. For it is Engels who, in his book *Dialectics of Nature*, extended dialectic into the realm of Nature; it is Lenin who took Engels' view as authentic Marx-Engels tradition on this subject. *Mao 1*, pp. 297, 299, 304, 305, 317, 319, 322–324, 329, 330, 332, 336–337, 340–341, 343, 345, especially 316–317.

Cf. Bocheński, *Diamat*, pp. 29–31, 80, 83.

John Hoffman, *Marxism and the Theory of Praxis*, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1975, pp. 45–56.

[95] The very dynamic and comprehensive nature of contradiction defies any concrete guiding principle in its application. Thus, it is understandable that in China so many people, including her top leaders, i.e., Mao's own colleagues, could not have the same understanding of, and hence apply unanimously, the principle of dialectic. Again, the Cultural Revolution is a classic example of such a conflict.

CHAPTER 6

[1] *Mao 1*, p. 316.

[2] Bocheński, *Diamat*, pp. 69–70. Z. A. Jordan, *op. cit.*, pp. 215–216. James Gregor, *op. cit.*, pp. 83–90.

[3] Mao seems to affirm the infinite capacity of human knowing as well as the infinite amount of knowledge, i.e., knowledge itself, to be acquired.

[4] This point will become clear when Mao's theory of dialectic is seen as his "world-view" which is both a theory and a method. Cf. Chapter 6 of this work, p. 118.

[5] Maurice DeWulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, London, Longmans, Green, 1909, pp. 32, 316. Also, cf. 'Ontology' in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, New York, Macmillan and The Free Press, 1967, vol. V, pp. 542–543.

[6] 'World-view' is used here to represent what three Chinese terms convey together: *yü-chou kuan* 宇宙觀, *shih-chieh kuan* 世界觀 and *jen-sheng kuan* 人生觀. The literal meanings of these three phrases are the view of the cosmos, the view of the world and the view of life, respectively. Thus, the full meaning of "world-view" is the fundamental attitude toward the 'world' or 'life' which includes nature, man and society.

[7] More concretely, Mao's theory of dialectic can be considered to include (1) theoretical knowledge of knowing and changing reality and (2) practical means of knowing and changing reality.

[8] Practicality or praxis is taken to mean the realization of what Mao's theory of dialectic tries to achieve: to understand reality-as-contradiction correctly and to change it accordingly.

[9] It is interesting to note that Mao's view of the dialectical movement of contradiction

seems to follow a Hegelian process of mediation (i.e., universality) and mediation of mediation (i.e., particularity) through the principle of transformationality – which all leads to an even higher level of truth or contradiction.

[10] In Scholastic philosophy 'essence' should be understood vis-à-vis 'existence'. The former refers to *essentia* (*id quod est*) or that which is – the fundamental constitutive substance of a being (thing). The latter refers to *esse* (*quo est*) or that principle by which that being (thing) exists. Cf. De Wulf, *op. cit.*, pp. 323–324. Hyman & Walsh, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

[11] This is obvious because in practical terms, particularity consists of nothing but the concrete and essential characteristics of a contradiction, whether that contradiction be a thing or a social phenomenon. Then, if one has no knowledge of the particularity of a contradiction one cannot understand the essence or nature of that contradiction. Without understanding the essence or nature of that contradiction, according to Mao, how can one expect to be able to solve it?

[12] This shows that Mao's synthetic praxis, though a method in itself, is actually part of his theory of dialectic, because it is constantly used to study the universality, particularity and dialectic of any contradiction.

[13] Using the four threefold movements *dialectically* means applying them according to concrete circumstances and situations. There is no 'temporal sequence' as regards which threefold movement should be used first.

[14] *Mao 1*, p. 329.

[15] *Mao 1*, p. 321.

[16] The two terms 'relative rest' and 'conspicuous change' are 'original' only in the sense that they are new terms. But as far as their content is concerned, it is not original or new; these terms denote 'quantitative change' and 'qualitative change' respectively.

[17] It seems always an irony of fate when the great thinkers are superceded by their later disciples and their systems are made 'unrecognized' by same. This happened to Plato, Aristotle, St. Thomas, Hegel and Marx, to mention but a few. The same seems to be true with Mao's theory of dialectic. While its soul, 'dynamic flexibility', makes it an ever-open system, Mao's theory of dialectic becomes 'rigid' and 'dogmatic' in the hands of his disciples, i.e., Maoists of all kinds.

[18] *Mao 1*, p. 342; Mao, *Essays*, p. 95.

[19] Mao repeated time and again that Marxism is neither a lifeless dogma nor a ready-made panacea. Cf. *Mao 1*, pp. 195–196, *Mao 2*, pp. 208–210, 380–381. *Mao 3*, pp. 37–38, 41, 79. *Mao 4*, pp. 457. Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Readings From the Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1971, p. 496.

[20] In the final analysis, Mao's conception of contradiction is essentially a 'relational' term or a 'relationship', though a relationship modified by 'dynamic' 'interaction' plus its three nuances: difference, problem and antagonism. Cf. Chapter 3 of this work, pp. 51–54.

[21] Chapter 3 of this work, pp. 67–68.

[22] Mao's originality in his analysis and solution of many important and practical issues is most obvious on the domestic front in China, especially in her social reconstruction. For example, his treatment of social contradictions among the people, the question of the total self-reliance of the Chinese (free from any foreign domination including that of the Soviet Union) and the bureaucratic elitism and revisionism all demonstrate his original approach to solving the practical problems of China.

[23] The orthodox interpretation refers mainly to the official interpretation of the Soviet Union and to those who hold similar views.

[24] *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, trans. by Clems Dutt, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1963, pp. 123–125.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[26] *Mao 1*, p. 336. Mao also told Edgar Snow in 1937, "By the summer of 1920 I had become, in theory and to some extent in action, a Marxist, and from this time on I considered myself a Marxist." Edgar Snow, *Red Star over China, op. cit.*, p. 155.

It is worth remarking that in 1920, Mao was a Marxist more in action than in theory, because by then he had read only (in Chinese translation) *The Communist Manifesto, Class Struggle* by Kautsky and *A History of Socialism* by Kirkup. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

[27] *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, p. 123.

[28] What does it really mean when we assert that while recognizing the primacy of the economic base over the superstructure in general, Mao viewed their relationship as guided by the principle of transformationality which further depends on its conditionality? It means that, according to Mao, the economic base has only an 'ontological primacy' (a term Mao would not want to use), while in concrete and practical circumstances, whether primacy goes to the economic base or to the superstructure is determined by the principle of transformationality which further depends on its conditionality. In short, as far as 'practical primacy' is concerned, conditionality is the ultimate and decisive factor in determining it.

[29] *Mao 1*, p. 335.

[30] In Mao's mind, it is clear that since the economic base becomes the non-principal contradictory aspect, and since the superstructure (i.e., armies and policies) become the principal contradictory aspects, the ontological primacy of the former (i.e., the economic base) was transformed and hence 'transferred' to the latter (i.e., the superstructure) by its concrete circumstances, i.e., conditionality.

[31] *Mao 1*, p. 336.

[32] *Loc. cit.*

[33] 'The orthodox Marxist' refers again mainly to the official interpretation of the Soviet Union or those who hold similar views.

[34] Mao, *Essays*, p. 80. In addition, Mao's view of the Soviet Union in the 1960's and 1970's as 'revisionist' and 'social imperialist' and his view of Liu Shao-ch'i and Lin Piao as 'capitalist roaders' in the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, respectively, shows beyond a doubt that for Mao, contradictions, including antagonistic ones, did exist in socialist society.

[35] Chapter 3 of this work, pp. 53–54.

[36] *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*, p. 616.

[37] Philosophically speaking, Mao's view of the 'possibility' of transformationality between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions in socialist society is significant. Its significance lies in the following two facts. The first is that such a possibility would result in a new interpretation of the historical development of society, which is caused not only by the inner contradiction of the economic base, but also – at least possibly – by the superstructure, especially the conscious effort of revolutionary leaders. As a matter of fact, it is interesting to point out that Mao's role in guiding China's revolution (as well as his thought now) seemed to prove that a leader's idea can change society, i.e., the social structure, including the economic base. Secondly, Mao's view of the possibility

of transformationality between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions affirms that the history of society is an ever-open possibility, posing a challenge to all of us. Thus, any closed system of society or history, according to Mao, is false, dogmatic and without any philosophical base.

[38] Mao, *Essays*, pp. 82, 87.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[40] The philosophical foundation of Mao's concept of 'permanent revolution' seems to be the possibility of transformationality between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions in socialist society. However, the term 'permanent revolution' can be used in two senses. In the strict sense, permanent revolution can refer to the fact that the necessity of the violent means to resolve antagonistic contradictions (i.e., revolution) is permanent; it exists whenever antagonistic contradictions occur.

In the broad sense, 'permanent revolution' can refer to the fact that the necessity of revolutionary 'spirit' is permanent, carried on from generation to generation. Of these two senses, it seems that the latter is used much more often than the former.

Stuart Schram has devoted some thought to this subject in his article, 'Mao Tse-tung and the Theory of Permanent Revolution', *China Quarterly* 46 (1971), pp. 221–244 and also in his book, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, pp. 98–103, 128–129. However, he seems to treat Mao's concept of permanent revolution only in the strict sense.

[41] Mao's concept of revolution can also be understood in two senses. Literally, revolution refers to "an act of insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another". (*Mao 1*, p. 28. Cf. Also *Mao 1*, 344; *Mao 2*, 219, 224–225). In philosophical terminology, a revolution is the violent means of resolving antagonistic contradictions (between two class enemies).

In the broad sense, however, Mao's concept of revolution can be used to refer to the 'spirit' of revolution (understood in the strict sense) or the urgency of the task of continuous transformation of society, especially after the seizure of political power through violent means. Used in this broad sense, revolution is a political term which connotes a 'revolutionary spirit'. Cf. *Mao 2*, pp. 244, 329–330, 326–327, 358–359. *Mao 4*, pp. 374, 426.

[42] Cf. Note No. 40 of Chapter 6.

[43] Indeed, in China's recent history, the Cultural Revolution can be considered as the classic example of non-antagonistic contradictions being transformed into antagonistic ones.

[44] The implicit premise is our own reflection on the nature of human knowing. While the precise nature of the human mind is yet to be explored, its synthetic characteristic seems to play one of the most important functions in human knowledge as well as human development as a whole. On this point, Cf. Harold Kelman, 'Toward a Definition of Mind', in Jordan M. Scher (ed.), *Theories of the Mind*, New York, The Free Press, 1962, pp. 243–246; Donald D. Glad, '"Mind" as an Organismic Integration', in *Ibid.*, pp. 519–531; Gustav Bergmann, 'The Contribution of John B. Watson', in *Ibid.*, pp. 674–688; and Clifford Geertz, 'The Growth of Culture in the Evolution of Mind', in *Ibid.*, pp. 713–737.

[45] Mao's understanding of Marxism comes mainly from his study of the Chinese translations of Soviet writings on Marx and Engels in the 1920's and in the 1930's when he had to give lectures on the essentials of Marxism by way of concrete and everyday Chinese examples to the young students at the (Yenan) Anti-Japanese Academy.

Cf. Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-tung, op. cit.*, pp. 222–223.

Karl A. Wittfogel, 'Some Remarks on Mao's Handling of Concepts and Problems of Dialectic', *Studies in Soviet Thought* III, 4, (December, 1963), pp. 251–277.

Stuart Schram, 'Mao Tse-tung as Marxist Dialectician', *China Quarterly* 29 (1967), pp. 156–165.

But Edgar Snow's interview with Mao seemed to provide a different view on Mao's writings (especially 'On Contradiction', 'On Practice', and the alleged 'Dialectical Materialism') from those of Schram and Wittfogel (Snow, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 205–207):

> "While you were making a revolution in China you also revolutionized foreign Sinology and now there are various schools of Maoists and Pekingologists. Not long ago I attended a conference where professors debated whether you had or had not made any original contributions to Marxism. I asked one professor, at the close of the conference, whether it would make any difference in their controversy if it could be shown that Mao himself had never claimed to have made any creative contribution. The professor impatiently replied, 'No, indeed. That would be quite beside the point.'"
>
> Mao laughed. More than two thousand years ago, he said, Chuang Chou wrote his immortal essay on Lao Tzu (in The *Chuang Tzu*). A hundred schools of thought then arose to dispute the meaning of the *Chuang Tzu*.
>
> "In 1960 when I last saw you I asked whether you ever wrote or had any intention of writing an autobiography. You replied that you had not, except as you had told me something about your life. Nevertheless, some professors have discovered 'autobiographies' written by you. A question currently exercising the professors is whether you in fact wrote your celebrated philosophical essays, 'On Contradiction' and 'On Practice' in the summer of 1937, as asserted in your *Selected Works*, or whether they were really composed some years afterward. I myself seem to recall having seen unpublished longhand translations of those essays in the summer of 1938. Would you give me your own opinion about when you composed those two essays?"
>
> He replied that he had indeed written them in the summer of 1937. During the weeks preceding and immediately following the Lukouchiao incident[5] there had been a lull in his life in Yenan. The army had left for the front and Mao had found time to collect materials for some lectures on basic philosophy for use in the (Yenan) Anti-Japanese Academy. Some simple and yet fundamental text was needed for the young students being prepared, in brief three-month courses, for political guidance during the years immediately ahead. At the insistence of the Party, Mao prepared 'On Contradiction' and 'On Practice' to sum up the experience of the Chinese revolution, by combining the essentials of Marxism with concrete and everyday Chinese examples. Mao said that he wrote most of the night and slept during the day. What he had written over a period of weeks he delivered in lecture form in a matter of two hours. Mao added that he himself considered 'On Practice' a more important essay than 'On Contradiction.'

"An essay called 'Dialectical Materialism', not included in your *Selected Works*, had been attributed to you by Mao Tse-tung specialists in the West.[6] Did you write any such essay?"

Mao asked for the question to be repeated. He replied that he had never written an essay entitled 'Dialectical Materialism.' He thought that he would remember it if he had.

[46] Snow, *Red Star*, pp. 145–146.

[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 145–149, Snow, *Red China*, pp. 142–149.

[48] Snow, *Red Star*, p. 144, and *The Long Revolution*, p. 207.

[49] The fact that Mao did not have 'time' to study Marxism during the 1920's is demonstrated by his journeys and revolutionary activities. He went to Peking in September 1918 and worked at the Peking University library as an assistant. But in February 1919 he returned to Ch'ang-sha to teach at the Hsiu-yeh Primary School. In December 1919 he went back to Peking and was exposed to the limited number of Chinese translations of Marxist works. In April he went to Shanghai, then to Ch'ang-sha. In July 1921 he attended the First Chinese Communist Party Congress in Shanghai. After that meeting, being a confirmed Marxist, Mao launched many revolutionary activities. This all shows beyond a doubt that during his initial period of conversion to Marxism, 1918–1921, Mao had no time to devote to the formal study of Marxism. Cf. Chen, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, pp. 376–378.

[50] Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, pp. 297–299.

[51] The basic Marxist ideas were perhaps those contained in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx's preface to *The Capital, Class Struggle* by Kautsky, *Anti-Dühring* and Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.*

[52] Cf. Chapter 1 of this work, p. 22.

[53] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, p. 207; Han Suyin, *The Morning Deluge*, pp. 383–385.

[54] From our presentation of the development of dialectic in Chinese thought, it is clear that two dialectical concepts – 'relationship' and 'dynamic change' – are very important in all major philosophical schools. It is also in the context of these two dialectical ideas that Chinese thought can be considered as 'dialectical'. Cf. pp. 87–102 of this work.

[55] One of the reasons why Mao (and especially his followers) wanted to disassociate himself and his writing from traditional Chinese thought was that he intended to create a new political ideology, i.e., Marxism, especially during the 1930's and 1940's. This was necessary, according to Mao, because traditional Chinese thought as a whole was no longer relevant in the process of the Chinese revolution. But since China's culture (with its positive and negative values) had been formed over more than four thousand years, its influence upon the Chinese, including Mao, has been pervasive, comprehensive, though not always explicit.

[56] According to Engels, both he and Marx were partly to blame for the rigid interpretation of the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure. But neither Marx nor he made such a dogmatic assertion. In a letter to Joseph Bloch Engels wrote, "according to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase . . . Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that

the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due it. We had to emphasize the main principle vis-à-vis our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place or the opportunity to allow the other elements involved in the interaction to come into their rights." Friedrich Engels, 'The Letter to Joseph Bloch' in Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 640, 642.

It is interesting to note that Mao's view on the relationship between the economic base and the superstructure is very similar to that of Engels and that Mao's view of the existence of contradictions and their transformationality in socialist and Communist society seems original because Marx and Engels said nothing about this subject.

[57] Ever since Mao's leadership was recognized in 1935 at the Tsunji Conference, Mao's leadership was openly challenged only once by P'eng Te-huai in 1958. After that, while Mao's leadership was still 'honored' in public Liu Shao-ch'i actually assumed the day-to-day administration of the country in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Of course, through the Cultural Revolution, Mao's leadership regained its full strength, and reigned supreme until his death in 1976. Even after his death, it seems that Mao's Thought has continued to exert its influence upon his successors and other top leaders. However, how long the situation can last remains to be seen.

[58] Cf. The same chapter of this work, p. 125–126.

[59] One of the main reasons for the Sino-Soviet conflict was certainly Mao's independent course in guiding China's social transformation and reconstruction. Cf. Chapter 1 of this work, pp. 24–26.

[60] Mao's stamp on the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1968 was unmistakable. Again, his personal but independent interpretation of China's critical situation in the mid-1960's convinced him of the necessity of the Cultural Revolution. Cf. Chapter 1 of this work, pp. 26–27.

[61] Even today (the Fall of 1977), Mao's thought regarding the main direction of China is still being followed by Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, though with some modifications.

CONCLUSION

[1] The six divisions of philosophy became the standard divisions in scholastic philosophy after St. Thomas. Cf. De Wulf, *op. cit.*, pp. 316–335. But various divisions existed throughout different philosophical periods. As early as the time of Aristotle, his works already covered topics in logic, metaphysics, physics, practical philosophy (ethics and politics), rhetoric and poetics – there was no 'natural theology' or 'epistemology' as such.

[2] One noticeable characteristic of Chinese philosophical writings, albeit different from that of Western philosophy, is brevity. The classic example is the *Tao-te Ching* which is one of the most important classics but which contains only about 5,250 words. The writings of Confucius, Mencius and others are also extremely short in comparison with their counterparts in Western philosophy. Furthermore, because of their brevity, Chinese philosophical writings tend to have a content that is distilled from reflection on personal experience and expressed concisely in proverbs, aphorisms or allusions rather than in the systematic, long and rational discussions so typical of Western philosophical writings. Cf. Fung, *SHCP*, pp. 6–15.

[3] Chan Wing-tsit, 'Chinese Theory and Practice, with Special Reference to Humanism', in Moore, *The Chinese Mind*, pp. 11–28.

[4] The various philosophers (*chu-tzu* 諸子) of the Classical Period have been classified by Ssu-ma T'an, the father of Ssu-ma Ch'ien (compiler of the *Shih Chi* 史記, China's first great general history) into six schools: the *yin-yang* 陰陽, the Confucians (*ju* 儒), the Mohists (*mo* 墨), the Names (*ming* 名), the Legalists (*fa* 法) and the Taoists (*tao-te* 道德). Fung, *HCP I*, p. 21. However, since Confucianism was declared *the* philosophy around 100 B.C., the original philosophical writings began to be substituted by commentaries on the Classics. Fung, *HCP II*, the Note No. 1 on p. 2.

[5] While Mao made many references to the terminology and ideas of the Chinese classics in his writings, his attitudes toward the classics were generally very critical. Even during his childhood, when he had to learn the classics himself, Mao never seemed to appreciate them. Later, his admiration of K'ang Yu-wei and Liang Ch'i-ch'ao – two nineteenth century reformist (traditional) scholars – was short-lived. (Cf. Snow, *Red Star*, p. 140). But after becoming a Marxist in 1920, Mao, like many young revolutionaries at that time, was convinced that the traditional classics were no longer the viable 'ideology' for China, and that Marxism was the gospel which can and will save China from all her ills (though traditional Chinese values and ways of thinking – perhaps only implicitly – continued to influence him). Cf. Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, pp. 289–313.

[6] As a Chinese philosopher, Mao continues to espouse a practical philosophy based on the unity of theory and practice. But on the other hand, Mao's practical philosophy is extremely similar to Marx's conception of philosophy in that philosophy should not contemplate but rather change the world.

[7] Snow, *The Long Revolution*, pp. 71, 221.

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